













NEW INDIA



# NEW INDIA)

OR

*INDIA IN TRANSITION*

BY

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I DEDICATE  
THIS LITTLE BOOK  
BY PERMISSION  
WITH MUCH RESPECT  
TO THE  
MARQUIS OF RIPON



## P R E F A C E.

MY object in writing this book is to draw attention to the great changes which are taking place in India—changes political, social, and religious—and to the spirit which, in my judgment, should inspire our policy in relation to them.

The political situation demands decisive and immediate treatment. The conditions of our occupation combine to show increased difficulties in administration arising from financial pressure ; a waning enthusiasm on the part of English officials occasioned by a livelier consciousness of the drawbacks of Indian life ; a greater friction between the governors and the governed, attributable to many causes, but especially to the arrogance in thought and language of the ruling race, which has been brought out into stronger relief by the growth of independ-



ence among the natives. The people of the country, enlightened and educated by ourselves, expanding with new ideas, and fired by an ambition to which English education has given birth, make demands which are continually more and more reasonable and more irresistible. The waves of the ocean of native progress are dashing against the breakwater of English prejudice. The members of the Anglo-Indian community, like the courtiers of Canute, call loudly on the Government to restrain the advancing tide. The Government, insufficiently attuned to the requirements of the situation, unlike Canute, is, not yet strong enough or wise enough to turn a deaf ear to their advice.

The crisis is acute, and can only be overcome by making a prompt and liberal concession to legitimate aspirations. To neglect this duty can only be characterised as culpable and dangerous blindness. But we cannot expect the co-operation of Europeans in India in this direction. On the contrary, we have the best reason for assuming that the attitude of Anglo-Indians will, in general, be one of uncompromising opposition to such a policy. We can

rely on the Government only for a disposition to take the required action. For the motive power which shall rouse the Government to bestir itself we must look to public opinion in England. It is on public opinion at home that every Indian must depend who desires to promote the practical interests of his countrymen.

The problem before us is the systematic encouragement of the aspirations and spontaneous tendencies of the Indian people. A constructive policy is needed, which shall not only guide and control events during the period of transition, but shall also when necessary abstain from interference. The difficulty is to pass from the old to the new order without disturbance.

In their religious and social aspect the changes taking place are not less considerable. The function of Government in this case is to preserve, as far as possible, the existing basis of order by a policy of wise conservation.

I have confined myself to the discussion of principles : avoiding detail, principally because details are unsuited to the English reader for whom the book is intended, and partly because the short leisure from Indian service which I

have snatched for the purpose has been insufficient to allow me to attempt an exhaustive treatment. If I appear to have written strongly it is because I feel strongly. I am profoundly convinced of the importance of the changes which are taking place. No one is in a better position than I am to appreciate the benefits which our rule has conferred on India. It is more than twenty years since I qualified for admission into the Civil Service by competitive examination. My father and grandfather were members of that Service before me for sixty years. It is my pride that I am; as it were, an hereditary member of the administration; and I am not deficient, I trust, one whit in respect and loyalty to the Government which I serve. A spirit of devotion to the people of the country where I am employed is not inconsistent with, and will certainly never obliterate, my sense of official duties.

But while I am not slow to recognise the valuable qualities of our English rule, I am equally assured that the benefits we have conferred will never receive their due fulfilment unless we can raise ourselves above associations

of the official groove, and prepare ourselves for the exercise of higher functions than those of mere administration. The Government has deliberately infused new life into the Indian nation, and must not shrink from the responsibilities which are involved in giving full effect to this policy. What those responsibilities are, and what our future line of policy should be, are subjects which I, in no way forgetting that I am an official in the service of the Indian Government, have deemed it right to place before the consideration of the public.

I am indebted in this attempt to my friends the late Samuel Lobb (of the Indian Educational Department) and the late James Cruickshank Geddes (of my own Service) to an extent beyond acknowledgment. Mr. Lobb died in 1876, and Mr. Geddes in 1880; but for many years I lived in the closest intimacy and correspondence with both of them. The spirit of their teaching pervades the whole of this volume. Among living friends I owe most to Lieut.-Col. R. D. Osborn, and to two native gentlemen—Baboo Jogendro Chunder Ghose and Mr. Nogendro Nath Ghose, barrister-at-law. Their

aid has been very material. The *Indian Nation*, a newspaper edited by Mr. N. N. Ghose, has supplied me with many valuable reflections. I must also acknowledge my obligations to Dr. Congreve's pamphlet on 'India.' It remains only to add that portions of the following pages, which have already appeared as articles in the *Fortnightly Review* and *New Quarterly Magazine*, are republished with the kind permission of the proprietors.

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# NEW INDIA.

## *THE POLITICAL CRISIS.*

THE readers of Professor Seeley's book on 'The Expansion of England'<sup>1</sup> cannot fail to have been struck by that portion of it in which he indulges in a somewhat elaborate discussion on the existence of a nationality in India. He observes :—

We content ourselves with remarking that we in England would be most unwilling to be governed by the French, and that the French would be sorry to be governed by the Germans ; and from their example we draw the conclusion that the people of India must in like manner feel it a deep humiliation to be governed by the English. Such notions spring from mere idleness and inattention. It does not need proving, it is sufficient merely to state, that it is not every population which constitutes a nationality. The English and French are not mere populations ; they are popula-

<sup>1</sup> *The Expansion of England* : Two Courses of Lectures, by J. R. Seeley (Macmillan, 1883).



tions united in a very special way and by very special forces. Let us think of some of these uniting forces, and then ask whether they operate upon the populations of India.

He has then no difficulty in showing that there is no community of race or language in India ; that there is no sense of common interest, no habit of forming into a single political whole ; there is also no common religion, which is probably the strongest and most important of all the elements which go to constitute nationality. There is therefore no real sentiment of patriotism among the people. It is this fact, he goes on to explain, that makes our empire in India possible. The armies which have won our victories in India have always consisted mainly of native troops ; and that we are able to hire these native troops for service is due to the fact that there is no feeling of nationality among them. But, he continues,—

If this state of things should alter, if by any process the population should be welded into a single nationality, if our relation to it should come to resemble even distantly the relation of Austria to Italy, then I do not say we ought to begin to fear for our dominion, I say we ought to cease at once to hope for it. . . . The moment a mutiny is but threatened, which shall be no mere mutiny, but the expression of a universal feeling of nationality—at that moment all hope is at an end, and all desire ought to be at an

end, of preserving our empire. For we are not really conquerors of India, and we cannot rule her as conquerors ; if we undertook to do so, it is not necessary to inquire whether we could succeed, for we should assuredly be ruined financially by the mere attempt.

It is then incidentally suggested—and this is one of those remarks that indicate a true insight into the real position of affairs—that our own rule is perhaps doing more than was ever done by former Governments to make a nationality possible. India is a vast assemblage of different nations, divided into unsympathising castes, classes, and creeds. The British Government is a supreme power, separate and distinct from all the nations which acknowledge its sway. Unsympathetic as the subject races may be among themselves, our Government is even more unsympathetic with all of them, and a probability therefore always exists that they will consent to merge their own minor differences and unite in their opposition to the common head. An organisation only is wanted, around which the elements of opposition may cluster.

We have ourselves established the basis of such an organisation. It is education, and education according to English methods and on the lines of Western civilisation, that is already serving to unite the varying forces among the

Indian population. No other bond of unity was possible : the confusion of tongues was an insuperable obstacle. But now the English language is established as the channel through which the fire-worshippers of Bombay and the Baboos of Bengal, the Brahmins of Madras, and the Marattas of Poona, the Pathans and Rajpoots of Upper India, and the Tamil and Telugu speaking races of the other extreme end of the peninsula, are able to meet on one common platform, and to give expression to their common interests and aspirations. The germ of a national organisation on the basis of English education has long existed, and has expanded with the spread of education, but it has actually sprung into its present vigour in very recent times. Its present development is due to causes intended to produce a very different effect. The Anglo-Indian agitation, of which we have lately heard so much, the anti-native protests against the policy of Lord Ripon—protests which assert that ‘the only people who have any right to India are the British’—the whole attitude, in brief, of Europeans in regard to the so-called Ilbert Bill, have tended far more to advance the true cause of Indian unity than any mere legislation on the lines of the original Bill would have been likely to accomplish. That humble but inadequate measure, if it had

been allowed to pass without opposition, would have proved innocuous and comparatively ineffective in any direction. But the unreasonable clamour and rancour of its opponents, and the unexpected success which attended their efforts, gave rise to a counter agitation of first-rate importance and of the most far-reaching character. Clamour was met by clamour, and a national agitation, published and disseminated by means of the English language, was carried on throughout the length and breadth of India. The very object was attained which the Anglo-Indian community, if it had been wise in its generation, would have spared no labour to prevent. The people of India have not been slow to follow the example set to them by Englishmen: they have learnt their strength, the power of combination, the force of numbers; and there now exists in all the provinces of India a national movement which is destined to develop and increase until it receives its fulfilment in the systematic regeneration of the whole country.

If evidence of a national organisation is needed, it will be found in the extraordinary enthusiasm with which the natives of India, of all castes, classes, and creeds, united to honour Lord Ripon on the occasion of his departure from India. Such demonstrations in honour of

a retiring Viceroy are altogether a novel phenomenon. The homage that was tendered to Lord Ripon was never before offered to any foreign ruler. The spectacle of a whole nation stirred by one common impulse of gratitude has never before been witnessed in Indian history. No demonstration could have been more characterised by both unanimity and spontaneity. No sign could show more clearly that the germ of a nationality has already developed into adolescence.

The death of Keshub Chunder Sen, who was one of the most eminent Hindoos of our generation and a leader of the Brahmic movement, was another occasion for the manifestation of a truly national sentiment. The natives of all parts of India, whatever their religion may have been, united with one voice in the expression of sorrow at his loss, and pride in him as a member of one common nation. Still more recently the unanimity of native thought in the protestations of India's loyalty to England may be cited (without attaching undue value to the sentiments expressed) as a remarkable proof of a national organisation developed not in one province only, but all over India and among all classes.

This growth of a national spirit marks the revolution to which India has been subjected in

its political aspect. It proceeds hand in hand with the social and moral revolution to which I shall subsequently refer, and is due to the same initial cause, viz. the spread of Western ideas and civilisation. But whereas in the one case it is not in the power of the Government to exercise a beneficial interference, in the other it is incumbent on the Government to act in co-operation with the Indians themselves in furthering the changes already commenced. The danger is that by too tardy a recognition of these changes we may drive the educated classes to force their opportunity before the country is ripe for such a consummation. National differences settle themselves roughly, and those who have not advanced beyond the transition period will always be apt to be borne away by the violence of the stream. The leaders of the people, therefore, will not venture to allow themselves to lag behind the enthusiasm of their foremost followers. The times are critical, and at such a moment true statesmanship will be evinced not only by care and caution, but also by wise encouragement. The aim of all of us should be towards a quiet re-organisation if it be possible; and whether it be possible or not must largely depend upon the judicious co-operation of Government.

There is, indeed, no practical danger of that

somewhat alarming future which Professor Seeley appears to contemplate. It would be a frightful calamity if some unforeseen disaster were to compel us to withdraw from our occupation of India. At the same time it is but folly not to recognise that our occupation of the country cannot be permanent, and that the relations between England and India already show signs of change. It is not literally true that India is maintained by the sword. If this were true it would mean that the people are continually in a position of antagonism and resistance to the Government, and that it is force alone that keeps them down. But whoever knows the facts knows that this is not so. The sword has no occasion to come into play, for there is no resistance. The real state of things would be better described by calling the Government of India a government by the sufferance of the people. The declaration that the English rule could not survive the erection of India into a true nation rests too much on this fallacy of the sword. There can be no doubt that English rule in its present form cannot continue. But the leaders of what I have ventured to call a national movement, while they assume independence as the only basis on which a nationality is possible, presuppose also that the connection between India and England will not be snapped. The English

language, while it is the means of enabling the different populations of India to attain unity, binds them also to Great Britain. It is from England that all the ideas of Western thought which are revolutionising the country have sprung; the language of Shakespeare and Milton has become the common language of India; the future of India is linked with that of England, and it is to England that India must always look for guidance, assistance, and protection in her need. If the creation of a national spirit in India is a fact of which we cannot doubt, it is better to familiarise ourselves at once with the conceptions its realisation involves. We may assert with confidence that India will no more break from its connection with England than it will from the Hindoo or Mahomedan periods of its history. We may anticipate a time when the existence of healthy relations will be guaranteed by the establishment of a federation of native states—each with its own local autonomy and independence—under the immediate supremacy of England. And we may venture to look for the basis of internal order, to the recognition of that organisation which from time immemorial has existed in India—a patrician aristocracy of indigenous growth, trained by past associations to control and lead the lower orders of the people.

. . This is the forecast of a future, dim and



distant though it be, the gradual attainment of which it is the privilege of Government to regulate. It demands from our Indian Government a capacity for reconstruction, for guidance and sympathy during a period of transition, for energy and action when it is necessary to advance, for masterly inactivity and watchful repose when it is more necessary to look to the preservation of order and the encouragement of spontaneous development. It calls for the qualities of statesmanship rather than of administrative ability. It is easy to administer uprightly the affairs of a docile and subject people ; it is easy, with the power of British bayonets at our back, to coerce refractory rajahs, and to settle by secret diplomacy the conflicting interests of native states ; it is easy to lead our victorious armies among imperfectly armed and semi-savage nationalities, to annex provinces, and by despotic rule evolve order out of chaos. It is a sublimer function of imperial dominion to unite the varying races under our sway into one empire, ' broad-based upon the people's will ' ; to fan the glowing embers of their national existence ; to wait upon, foster, and protect their instinctive tendencies ; to afford scope to their political aspirations, and to devote ourselves to the peaceful reorganisation of their political independence as the only basis of our relationship henceforward between the two countries. .

*NATIVE OPINION AND ASPIRATIONS.*

NOTHING is more difficult than for an Englishman to probe the real meaning of native opinion, or to gauge the true character of native sentiments towards our rule. Insuperable obstacles of colour, of physique, of race, of religion, of language, present themselves at every turn to frustrate the possibility of any real intimacy with the inhabitants of the country. It is very rarely that natives will be found to express themselves with openness to a European. Were there no other reason, the peculiar official relationship would explain this. But independently of any official relations, the attitude of Englishmen to Indians is not of a character to inspire confidence. Englishmen never know natives in their homes. Native gentlemen are, therefore, naturally exclusive and reserved. It must be allowed, also, that their own caste system is calculated to preclude them from association with Europeans. The longer we have occupied India, the less almost do we seem to know of the life of the people. The tendency, instead of

being towards intercommunion, is rather in the direction of increased divergence.

We derive, moreover, the most false impressions of native thought from the natives with whom we do come in contact. The best type of native gentlemen do not usually come in contact with us at all; and it is hardly the language of hyperbole if I say that the real leaders of opinion are (with a few exceptions) men of whose existence even we are unconscious. Those whom we do meet are either officials or else gentlemen of property and position, with whom it is a traditional duty to pay their respects to those in authority over them. The Rai Bahadoors and the Rajahs and Nawabs who are honoured by a private audience with the Viceroy and the Lieutenant-Governors of provinces are not the leaders of the people. They are men of rank and dignity, and are therefore entitled to honourable consideration, but they are not representatives of the nation in any sense. Their conversation is not the echo of native views and sentiments. Their voice strikes no responsive chord among the people. Still less are those natives in any degree representative whose highest pleasure it appears to be to fawn upon and flatter the members of the ruling race. There is no more satisfactory token of the higher standard of thought which has accom-

panied English education than the thorough spirit of contempt with which these men are regarded by the stronger and more restless and independent among their fellow-countrymen. There are wealthy native gentlemen who court the company of officials, and do not scruple to dispose of their native guests with scanty ceremony, while they reserve the grandest display, the richest luxuries, and the choicest amusements for the delectation of their European guests. At such entertainments, where Viceroys and Lieutenant-Governors have been spectators, I have seen caricatures of Indian life presented on the stage for the amusement of Europeans. These caricatures are amusing, no doubt, but for the Englishmen who behold them they only afford material for satire, and for increasing the contempt with which the natives are already regarded. The spirit of self-abasement which degrades itself to giving such an entertainment excites indignation in nobler minds; and yet English officials, from the Viceroy downwards, who are held to honour such spectacles by their presence, believe that by so doing they ingratiate themselves with the native community, and bridge the gulf between the races. Vain delusion! They foster the pushing, the cringing, the slavish instinct among the natives, which needs no encouragement.

The really best men among the natives of India, who influence opinion and lead society not less by their intellectual accomplishments than in virtue of the moral qualities of honesty and independence, are naturally of a more retiring disposition and somewhat proud. They do not care to make the acquaintance of Government officials if they can help it, and they do not thrust themselves on the Government. They are not to be found on railway platforms to receive officials or bid them good-bye; they do not attend meetings with the sole object of picking up influential acquaintances. They do not dedicate books to officials, organise ovations for them, or seek to perpetuate their names by public buildings, like roads and so forth. Wise in their own reticence, dignified in their self-respect, the true leaders of native opinion pursue their own course with as little communication with Europeans as is consistent with the exercise of their full influence. Englishmen hear little of them, and the Government, as a rule, knows them not; but their names are household words among the homes of the people.

The public opinion of India is moulded in the metropolis, and takes its tone almost entirely from the educated community which centres in the chief towns. Except in regard to their own local affairs, the masses of the

people are indifferent, not as to the manner in which, but as to the hands by which, the powers of government are exercised over them. They look to the educated natives for guidance. Calcutta is now more to Bengal than Paris is to France. Madras and Bombay are no less forward than Calcutta in the dissemination of political thought and action. No one can pretend to possess any knowledge of native feeling who does not keep his finger on the pulse of public opinion in the Presidency towns. There is a growing unanimity of opinion throughout India, based on the increased solidarity of native thought and the spread of English education. The people of India cannot but act and think as that section of the community which monopolises the knowledge of politics and administration may instruct them. The educated classes are the voice and brain of the country. The Bengalee Baboos now rule public opinion from Peshawur to Chittagong; and although the natives of North-western India are immeasurably behind those of Bengal in education and in their sense of political independence, they are gradually becoming as amenable as their brethren of the lower provinces to intellectual control and guidance. A quarter of a century ago there was no trace of this; the idea of any Bengalee influence in the Punjab would have been a con-

ception incredible to Lord Lawrence, to a Montgomery, or a Macleod ; yet it is the case that during the past year the tour of a Bengalee lecturer, lecturing in English in Upper India, assumed the character of a triumphal progress ; and at the present moment the name of Surendro Nath Banerjea excites as much enthusiasm among the rising generation of Mooltan as in Dacca.

In former times the native masses, so far as they were represented at all, depended on the European officials of the country for support. Such representation was obviously of the most imperfect description, but it existed to some extent, and served at least to protect the people from oppression at the hands of the non-official or 'interloper' European element. The early effects of English education did not disturb this state of things ; on the contrary, the tendency among the educated natives, who were imbued with Western ideas, was rather to hold themselves aloof from the people. They were highly educated in comparison with the masses, and all their new associations induced them to separate from their own countrymen. But now their attitude is changed. The educated natives as they increase in number become more and more the rivals of the Europeans, and especially of the official class, who stand between them and

the prizes of their ambition. As their numbers increase they become less isolated among themselves, and fall back more and more on the community from which they sprung. One of the healthiest impulses which can be traced in Hindoo society is the corresponding change which has come over the masses of the people, who have now learnt to transfer their allegiance to the educated classes as their natural and best representatives.

I cannot too strongly protest against the fashion which is so much in vogue, of deriding and sneering at this movement as a mere schoolboy agitation. It is true that the leaders of native thought are often comparatively young, and that their followers are to a large extent still students of our colleges. I have no desire to minimise the legitimate inferences which may be drawn from this fact. I do not deny that the movement might be a more valuable one in many respects if its leaders were men of greater experience. But I do not forget that the student class has been largely instrumental in the formation of public opinion even in Europe, and I am therefore not surprised that the students of India should be potent factors in the dissemination of opinion in that country.

In times of change the young will always lead. The vitality of the movement and the



surest guarantee of its persistence are to be found in the fact that it is taken up by those who have all the vigour and energy of youth. In any case the defects of youth are those which time will cure. No wise statesman in any country, and least of all in India, where education, which has roused all this movement, is still young, and New India, to which the movement has given birth, is in its infancy, will venture to despise the public opinion which emanates from youthful agitators and patriots. For it is these men, the striplings of the present generation, who are the fathers of the next.

The attitude of Anglo-Indians in this respect is an indication of the unsympathetic relations which exist between the two races. Europeans in India are blind to the real and obvious meaning of the great changes which are taking place before their eyes. They know not the machinery which works the change, and they see not the change itself. The mercantile community, immersed in its own affairs, possesses neither the leisure nor the inclination to associate with the educated class of natives any further than may be necessary for the transaction of business. Its members acquire the usual prejudice against natives which seems almost inseparable from our position in the East, but they gain with it no knowledge whatsoever of

Indian affairs or of the native character. The officers of the army are, with a few exceptions, wholly ignorant of all classes of the people except the soldiers under their immediate command. The members of the Civil Service and the other civilian subordinates of Government enjoy no doubt a wider perception of the social and political revolution, but for the most part their experience is confined to outlying tracts and provincial towns, and the changes effected come therefore comparatively little under their observation. They are deceived also by the glamour of their position, and by the sycophancy with which they are usually pursued by natives, whose first object is naturally to stand well with those in power. They are predisposed by all their associations, interests, and antecedents to deny the possibility of any radical change. Even when they are compelled to acknowledge the existence of any considerable social movement they will generally be found to depreciate its significance. Lastly, it must be added that the Government itself is not in a position to grasp the true meaning of the situation. Far removed in the serene Himalayan heights, it is not susceptible to the influences to which it would be subjected in the great capitals; and it labours under this disadvantage, that it is surrounded by advisers

whose experience has been gained elsewhere than in the metropolis, and otherwise than by association with the real leaders of native thought.

He would be a bold man who would unhesitatingly affirm that the people of India are friendly to the British Government. If outward manifestations are of any avail there ought to be no doubt of the loyalty of the native chiefs who, during the recent crisis, offered to place their armies at the disposal of Government to resist invasion ; of the opulent noblemen of the most peaceful province in the Empire, who offered to place their wealth and resources in the hands of Government for the same purpose ; of the native press, which has been almost unanimous in its protestations of loyalty ; and of the popular leaders who have set on foot a movement for the enlistment of native volunteers who desire to serve shoulder to shoulder with Englishmen in the defence of their country. But I must caution my readers not to be carried away unduly by these manifestations. Their meaning is different if we consider the different classes from which they come. The native chiefs who volunteer to place their soldiers at the disposal of Government are wise in doing so. They know, in the first place, that their offer is not likely to be accepted. They know, also,

that the annexation policy of Lord Dalhousie, although repudiated by Parliament and the English nation, is still cherished among the Indian services, and that the proposal is unceasingly made that their troops should be disbanded. But the maintenance of their own armies is to them a point of honour absolutely vital to their integrity as independent chiefs. They are powerless to protect themselves. There is no judicial authority to which they can appeal. There is no public opinion to watch their interests. There is no publicity to contest the action of a Government which is able to decide their fate as it pleases. Their rank and honour depend on the pleasure of a British Resident at their court, and on the secret and irresponsible mandates of a foreign office at Simla. If one thing is more certain than another, it is that in the event of a Russian invasion one of the first acts of Government would have been to disarm the armies of the native states. There was practically, therefore, no alternative before the chiefs but either to place their troops at the disposal of Government or to submit to their disbandment. They chose the wiser course, and by their action have effectually avoided the ignominy, which has been hanging over their heads like the sword of Damocles, of disbandment at any future time. They have

won the reputation of loyalty. I do not imply by these remarks that the native chiefs of India are less favourably disposed towards our Government than the other natives of the country, and that a Russian conquest would not be as abhorrent to them as it undoubtedly would be to the people generally ; but I do say that the real motive power which induced them to act as they did was a keen perception of political opportunity, by which they have distinctly gained a diplomatic advantage. They have risked and could have risked nothing by their offer, but they have gained much.

It is not agreeable to our national vanity to acknowledge that the offers of the native princes were not primarily actuated by motives complimentary to our rule ; but it is better to recognise the truth, and avoid thereby the grave political blunder we should otherwise have fallen into. Similarly it is well that we should realise in its full measure the undercurrent of bitterness and discontent which so widely prevails among the members of the educated and English-speaking community, and not attach undue importance to the newspaper utterances and other expressions of loyalty of which so much has been made. These men also are prudent in their generation. I do not doubt the genuineness of their manifestations. They are based

upon a fervent and wise desire to maintain the material basis of existing order in its integrity, to avoid premature change, and to preserve the *status quo* until modifications can be introduced with greater advantage. The horror of Russian invasion is a sentiment universal among all classes. The people of India do not like the English dominion, but they do not wish to see a change of masters. The educated classes like the dominion of England least of all ; but the educated classes most of all desire that there may be no sudden change. They fear lest a worse thing should befall them. They know that the abolition of English dominion would be accompanied by incalculable disaster. They know that if we were voluntarily to retire from India without guarantee of any kind for peace or order, they would instantly be subjugated by fierce and unlettered warriors. They know perfectly well that if the English were driven out of India by the Russians, an imperial Russian Government would prove less disinterested and philanthropic than an imperial British Government. They know at least that if the Russians were to come to India all the advantages which they have so laboriously acquired through English education would be lost. Their knowledge of Russian administration and Russian policy is very imperfect ; and being tainted

in every particular by English prejudices which they have derived from their English education, their dislike and dread of Russia is (with better reason, no doubt) even greater than that of Anglo-Indians, whose language and style in speaking of Russia they imitate. I apprehend, therefore, that the expression of their sentiments against Russia, and of their desire to support and even fight for England in her need, is undoubtedly genuine. But it is somewhat exaggerated also. Many of the native newspapers with shrewd instinct have not failed to perceive that no better opportunity could be afforded to them (especially on the appointment of a new Governor-General in the country) of writing up native loyalty, and of thereby vindicating a claim to greater confidence and to a larger share in the administration. It is impossible to admit the loyalty and deny the claim. If the Government will take no higher grounds, it will perhaps concede something to native aspirations in consideration of the loyalty of its native subjects. The truth, however, of all the manifestations on the part of the educated native community is, as I have already indicated, that they are evidence not of the zeal of the natives of India in support of our Government, but of their anxiety that that Government may not be replaced by a worse one. They are signs neither

of loyalty nor disloyalty. The use of such words as loyalty and disloyalty is meaningless when applied to the natives of a dependency like India. They are loyal in that they appreciate the advantages of British rule, and are grateful to the British Government for the benefits which have been conferred on them.<sup>1</sup> If this constitutes loyalty, they are loyal. They do not demand that the British ascendancy should be subverted. But they are embittered, deeply embittered, at their exclusion from power, at the deliberate neglect of assurances in their favour solemnly made and repeatedly renewed, at the contemptuous manner in which they are treated by Europeans, and at the insolence with which their legitimate aspirations are spurned and set aside. If it is disloyalty to attempt to wring concessions from the Government by all fair means within their power, they are disloyal. If it is disloyalty, when excluded from office themselves, to watch and

<sup>1</sup> This feeling is well expressed by a native writer in the columns of the *Indian Nation*, a paper ably conducted and most appropriately designated : 'An enlightened administration of justice, especially in criminal cases, religious toleration, liberty of the press, liberty of holding meetings and petitioning—these are rights which we in this country have so easily acquired that we are in danger of undervaluing them. We have secured by a few strokes of the pen of beneficent legislators, advantages which Englishmen have had in their own country to buy with their blood'



censure, often in no measured terms, the abuses of the authority exercised over them by Englishmen, they are disloyal. If in the formation of public opinion they place themselves in opposition to the ruling race, and in vindication of their own rights criticise freely the policy of Lieutenant-Governors and the action of the executive and judicial officers of Government, then they are disloyal. But they are not disloyal if disloyalty consists in the feeling that they would wish to see the English Government driven from India. That is not the feeling of the educated classes, and it is not the feeling of the nation. They tolerate the existence of our Government as an irrevocable necessity, which has done immense service to them in the past, but which they are determined to modify until it adapts itself to changes which, under its own impulse, have come into existence outside its constitution. They claim that the Government should repose confidence in them, and not shrink from raising them to the highest posts in civil and military life. They demand real, not nominal, equality, a voice in the government of their own country, and a career in the public service.

Lord Ripon<sup>1</sup> has well said, ' We have been

<sup>1</sup> Speech of Lord Ripon at the banquet given to him at the Leeds Liberal Club early in the present year (1885).

turning out year by year and month by month from our universities and schools streams of men with the best education that the English Government could give them. We have been throwing open to them English ideas and English thoughts, and have awakened in their minds many an aspiration, and raised in their hearts legitimate ambition. Is it possible to turn round on these men and say to them, "We will not give you any opening for those aspirations with which we have inspired you; we will not afford you any means for the satisfaction of that ambition which we have created"? Right well might Lord Ripon declare that to make such an answer to these men seemed to him the height of political folly. Right well, too, was it to quote the words of Macaulay in the House of Commons, when he said, 'Are we to keep these men submissive? or do we think we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition? or do we mean to awake ambition and provide it with no legitimate vent? Who will answer any one of these questions in the affirmative? Yet one of them must be answered in the affirmative by every person who maintains that we ought permanently to exclude the people of India from high office. I have no fears. The path of duty is plainly before us, and it is also the path of wisdom, of national

prosperity, and of national honour.' I can, indeed, conceive no more ignoble or unworthy policy than that a great power like England should avowedly continue to govern the Indian nations with the deliberate intention of keeping them down as they are at present, and with a set purpose of preventing their advance to freedom. This was the policy enunciated by Lord Ellenborough in his evidence before Parliament in 1853. It was re-echoed by the whole Anglo-Indian community in their opposition to the Ilbert Bill in 1883. There is no more discouraging volume of official literature in existence than that which contains the opinions of officers consulted on the provisions of that measure. Nothing is more deplorable than the unwillingness of the English community in India to recognise the signs of the times, and their inability to review a position which the march of events has rendered no longer tenable. The immediate outlook is, therefore, not a bright one. Anglo-Indians are almost unanimous in their virulent persecution of Lord Ripon, because he was able to discern—what they during their long residence in the East had failed to perceive—the rapid changes that education and Western civilisation had brought about among the natives of the country, and the irresistible political necessity that existed for moulding the

policy of Government in accordance with the changes made. The members of the Anglo-Indian community have shown themselves incapable of appreciating these new political forces, and their bitterness of dislike towards the members of the subject races has been aggravated by this incapacity. No help, therefore, is to be expected from them. Even the great majority of the officials employed under Government are in complete accord with non-officials in this respect, and are as directly opposed as non-officials can be to giving effect to that policy of general sympathy and encouragement of all national and popular aspirations with which the late Viceroy of India has permanently identified himself.

*THE INCREASED BITTERNESS OF  
RACE FEELING.*

THE remarks contained in the previous chapter lead me to further reflections regarding the existing relations between Englishmen and the natives of India. The subject is a painful one, but I cannot avoid it in these pages. I cannot say that the relations have ever been of a healthy character. Never at any time was there any real sympathy between the races, any sign of intercommunion, or of blending the two nations into one. There has always been a sense of dislike. Sir Walter Scott expresses the prevailing sentiment of race feeling, fostered by religious prejudice, very neatly in 'St. Ronan's Well,' by the mouth of Captain Mac-Turk, where he says, 'Py Cot! and I can tell you, sir! . . . Cot tamn! Compare my own self with a parcel of black heathen bodies and natives that never were in the inner side of a kirk whilst they lived, but go about worshipping sticks and stones, and swinging themselves upon bamboos, like peasts, as they are!'

Even so great a man as Lord Macaulay, with his liberal ideas, was not free from violent anti-native prejudice; and his false and libellous description of the Bengalee character, which has tended to influence injuriously the attitude of thousands towards the natives, may be said to undoubtedly represent the feeling of his contemporaries. When such sentiments were openly expressed the relations cannot have been healthy. But, generally speaking, I gather that in olden times the feeling of the ruling race towards the subject people was characterised by an absence of that bitterness which is now its most marked feature. The tone of feeling was rather one of lordly superiority and of contemptuous indifference.

Strange as it may seem, the strength of dislike—and there is now a growing reciprocity of dislike between the two races—has always been greater on the side of the European than on that of the native. Those who know the natives best will be the first to acknowledge the natural affection and gratefulness of their disposition. A native daily newspaper, published in Calcutta, the 'Indian Mirror,' contains some observations on this subject in a remarkable article entitled 'Native attachment and gratitude to good, just, and noble-minded Englishmen,' from which I make the following extract:—

It is a practical commentary on the truth and justice of the charge brought against natives, that they bitterly hate the dominant race as a rule, that individual attachment to individual Englishmen should be so marked a trait in native character. It is hardly possible to travel over any part of India where some individual Englishman has not left the impress of his hand, whether for good or evil, on the locality and its people. And it reflects the highest credit and honour on the native races that, while the names of the bad and oppressive men have almost been forgotten, the memory of the good, just, or charitable Englishmen has been preserved by tradition in perfect freshness—a perpetual testimony to the simplicity, forgiving spirit, and gratitude of the Indian character. To hate bitterly is not in native nature. The native heart is naturally kind, but the kindness becomes warmer when the object of it is a member of the dominant class. It is not always because we expect any return from him, but it is a peculiar feeling with us to be anxious to stand well with a race to whom we owe so many obligations as a fallen and subject people. If those obligations had been unmixed with quite as great wrongs, it is our fear that Englishmen might have become objects of our idolatry, so enthusiastic is our regard and affection for all who really mean to confer or have conferred on us any great benefits.

It seems to me that there is little or no exaggeration in these remarks ; and for my own part I must say that I have often been astonished at the ebullitions of native gratitude which are so frequently evoked when English

officials, who draw the whole of their salaries from India, have literally done no more than their bare duty by the people of the country in whose service they are employed. The expression of real sympathy with natives is always, in my experience, repaid by a hundredfold degree of respect and gratitude. As the 'Indian Mirror' again observes in the same article,—

It is utterly false to say, as has been said, that natives hate Englishmen as such. It is quite true that they do hate Europeans who miss no opportunity to scorn, abuse, and degrade them, or to injure them ; but it is equally true that their respect and attachment to such men of Western races as do or mean to do them any good is almost unbounded.

If there is any increase of dislike between the two races, I must distinctly place on record my conviction that the people of India are not responsible for this aggravation of sentiment. It is due entirely to the changed circumstances in which the ruling race has found itself placed.

It were, however, idle to deny that the sympathies of the two nations are less kindly than they were in the days of a past generation. Formerly English officials, notwithstanding their occasional sacrifice of self-respect, did succeed in some measure in identifying themselves with the people. Their devotion to India was not diverted into other channels. Their home



became their adopted country. Now things are changed ; their successors, regarding their functions as disagreeable and temporary, seize every opportunity to escape from them by frequent furloughs to Europe, or by retiring as soon as possible. A small minority there is who are always wretched while on leave, and longing to return to India, with whom the desire for sport, or it may be the pursuit of wealth, overcomes all considerations. But by the majority, assuredly, and in all grades of the service, India is detested with a growing intensity of dislike which it is impossible to exaggerate. With stronger ties attaching them to England, and increased facilities for visiting England, English officials grudge every hour of Indian service which keeps them from the West, where they have their real home. The feeling of impatience of their position, of anxious looking forward to the time when they can resign with decency, is on the increase. Their sojourn in India bears more and more the character of an exile, and the exile sighs for home. Home yearnings, instinctively right in themselves, thus interrupt an active outflow of sympathy for a dark-skinned and subject people.

The greater number of Europeans who now find their way to India is also a reason for their greater alienation from the natives of the coun-

try. When they were few, isolated, and scattered, they were constrained by the force of circumstances to associate with the men and women of the subject race. Now, in proportion as they are able to find companions among their own kinsfolk, they shrink from all avoidable communication with others; and their ignorance of the natives which results therefrom insensibly increases the bitterness of race feeling. Even the most narrow-minded members of the Anglo-Indian community do not dislike the natives with whom they are intimately associated, but those only with whom they have little or no acquaintance.

Other influences are also at work. The official mind is embittered, by memories of the mutiny, and the increased worry of administering new taxes, and of yielding vastly more work under more arduous conditions. The abuse of power, which has always been dangerously stimulated by the peculiarities of our position, is now restrained by the expression of public criticism which has, as it were, sprung suddenly into existence, and officials who have hitherto been practically irresponsible are irritated by the curtailment of their authority, and in many cases by its delegation to local boards and committees. It is a common complaint that officials nowadays have less consideration

for the feelings of native gentlemen than in former times. Fresh from their studies, placed almost at once in a position calling for the exercise of a statesman's qualifications, with no knowledge of men or the habits of Indian social life, often without the smallest amount of tact for ruling or leading men, they surrender themselves habitually, when in the society of natives, to an insolent demeanour of assumed superiority. A young magistrate who can maintain the dignity of his office with courtesy and conciliation is always respected; and in such a case it will invariably be found that the administration of local interests by means of native co-operation is a marked success. But in the majority of cases,—and unfortunately they are the majority—the proceedings of committees, benevolently designed by Government to bring together Europeans and natives as much as possible for the management of business, are conducted throughout with hectoring language and in a bullying tone; and a native commissioner who ventures to evince any independence of character, or to oppose an opinion of the chairman, may consider himself lucky if he escapes without personal contumely or insult. Native gentlemen go away silently; they rarely say what they feel; they would be horrified at anything like a scene, but they think and talk

among themselves, and their feelings, we may be sure, are the reverse of respectful to our vaunted rule. At the same time we find in private life an almost universal use of irritating expressions in regard to natives, which are not the less offensive when they proceed from persons who hold an official position, and have in other respects the outward seeming of English gentlemen. Among women, who are more rapidly demoralised than men, the abuse of 'those horrid natives' is almost universal. Among men, how often do we hear the term 'nigger' applied, without any indication of anger or intentional contempt, but as though it were the proper designation of the people of the country! Even with those who are too well-informed to use this term, the sentiment that prompts its use is not wholly set aside.

It is a grave symptom that the official body has now succumbed as completely as the non-official to anti-native prejudices. The non-official community is naturally, instinctively as it were, placed in a position of antagonism to the people of the soil. This fact is well brought out by Mr. John Stuart Mill, who writes,<sup>1</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> Chapter xviii. of 'Considerations on Representative Government,' which treats 'of the government of dependencies by a free state' (p. 135 of the People's Edition, Longmans, 1865).

If there be a fact to which all experience testifies, it is that when a country holds another in subjection, the individuals of the ruling people who resort to the foreign country to make their fortunes are, of all others, those who most need to be held under powerful restraint. They are always one of the chief difficulties of the Government. Armed with the *prestige*, and filled with the scornful overbearingness of the conquering nation, they have the feelings inspired by absolute power without its sense of responsibility. Among a people like that of India, the utmost efforts of the public authorities are not enough for the effectual protection of the weak against the strong ; and of all the strong the European settlers are the strongest. Wherever the demoralising effect of the situation is not in a most remarkable degree corrected by the personal character of the individual, they think the people of the country mere dirt under their feet ; it seems to them monstrous that any rights of the natives should stand in the way of their smallest pretensions ; the simplest act of protection to the inhabitants against any act of power on their part, which they may consider useful to their commercial objects, they denounce, and sincerely regard as an injury. So natural is this state of feeling in a situation like theirs, that even under the discouragement, which it has hitherto met with from the ruling authorities, it is impossible that more or less of the spirit should not perpetually break out. The Government itself, free from this spirit, is never able sufficiently to keep it down in the young and raw even of its own civil and military officers, over whom it has so much more control than over the independent residents.

In former times the civilian element in India was the consistent champion of native rights, and the people of the country always felt that the members of the Civil Service might be relied on to protect them from oppression at the hands of the English settlers. During the agitation which accompanied the passing of the so-called Black Act fifty years ago, when the whole non-official world was banded together to prevent what it conceived to be the injustice of allowing native judges to exercise civil jurisdiction over British-born subjects, the Civil Service as a body remained firm and supported the Government. During the indigo disturbances a quarter of a century ago the civilians were the staunch friends and protectors of the natives against the indigo planters, and incurred thereby an extraordinary amount of odium and obloquy. In those days it was the practice to blackball an official at the Bengal Club, whither men connected with indigo do most resort, merely because he was an official. There was little prospect then of the amalgamation of the two classes of Europeans, or of any identity of interests which would induce them both to combine in a spirit of self-protection against the natives. This is a change which it has been reserved for the spread of English education among the natives to produce. The natives

have now found their voice, and their principal demand is, as might have been expected, for a larger share in the loaves and fishes of the administration. A struggle is thereby generated with the official classes, and the sense of rivalry thus occasioned has created a more effective barrier between natives and officials than that which has always been felt to exist between natives and the non-official community. Both classes of Europeans are equally reluctant to admit the natives to equality, and the official class is especially aggrieved because the natives are invading preserves which have hitherto been free from any intruder. The time when the non-official Europeans formed one party in India and the natives another, while the Government officials were charged with the function of protecting native interests, has passed away, and instead thereof, we now see a state of things in which the native community exists alone on the one side, while both classes of Englishmen, official as well as non-official, are united on the other.

This is the result of education, which has tended to equalise the races, and the nearer the equality the stronger the dislike. The more Anglicised a native is, the more he is disliked by Englishmen. The sense of jealousy becomes greater. Whatever may be professed, Englishmen

are ready to encourage the natives who speak broken English more than those who speak good English ; those who are subject to Hindoo prejudices more than those who have renounced them ; and generally those who are far removed from English habits of thought and life more than those who have made a very close approach to them. They are more pleased with the backward Hindoo than with his advanced compatriot, because the former has made no attempt to attain equality with themselves.

This abhorrence of equality rankles in the mind of all Anglo-Indians, and especially of officials. It is the peculiarity of residence in the East to develop sentiments of intolerance and race superiority. Nearly all young men, on their first arrival in India, are animated by kindly feelings towards the natives of the country. Their generous instincts recoil from the outward manifestations of dislike evinced by the older residents, and it is rare to hear them degenerate to harsh expressions until after they have become demoralised by bad example and the false position in which they are placed. Degeneration, however, soon sets in, and few escape it. It is painful to observe the habitual and almost universal exhibition of race insolence displayed by our fellow-countrymen as soon as they come in contact with a lower scale of civilisation.



That intense Anglo-Saxon spirit of self-approbation which is unpleasantly perceptible in England itself, and is so often offensive among vulgar Englishmen on the Continent, very soon becomes rampant in India. Officials in India are far from being exempt from that weakness of human nature which is tickled by flattery, and nourished by servile obsequiousness. Our Oriental subjects have pandered to this weakness, and in accordance with the custom of Eastern countries practise the profoundest adulation and abasement towards those set in authority over them. English officials, although they pretend to dislike this attitude, are secretly pleased at it, and do not hesitate to give open expression to their annoyance at its non-observance. A civilian has been known to thrash with his whip a sepoy on duty who rightly neglected to comply with his orders ; another has chastised a constable with his own hands for a similar omission ; others have assaulted respectable residents of the country because on passing a European in the road they have not dismounted from their horses in token of their inferiority. A recent Lieutenant-Governor of a province did not consider it unworthy of his dignity to issue general orders regarding the character of the headdress to be worn by natives in the presence of their official superiors ; the great shoe

question, as it is called, has convulsed official society a hundred times. The comparative independence of the lads of the rising generation has excited in countless instances the ire of the officials who come in contact with them, and a crusade against the turbaned and muslin-coated students of Bengal has culminated in more than one unjust and ludicrous prosecution before a magistrate. It is with the extremest jealousy—notwithstanding their protestations in preference of a spirit of independence—that the official community has tolerated the omission by the natives of the country of any one of the extravagant signs of respect and humility to which it has hitherto been accustomed. But with the wide dissemination of English education and the growth of Western ideas it has been compelled to accept a change. ‘Men’<sup>1</sup> who speak better English than most Englishmen, who read Mill and Comte, Max Müller and Maine, who occupy with distinction seats on the judicial bench, who administer the affairs of native states with many millions of inhabitants, who manage cotton mills and conduct the boldest operations of commerce, who edit newspapers in English and correspond on equal

<sup>1</sup> It is a pleasure to me to quote this paragraph from my brother’s monograph on ‘India,’ in the English Citizen Series (Macmillan, 1883).

terms with the scholars of Europe—these can no longer be treated as an inferior breed.' They assert and exercise independence. They claim a position of equality with the ruling race. They demand to participate to an ever-increasing extent in the administration of their own affairs. They neglect to salaam to a European when they meet him in the street, and they do not take off their shoes in his presence. Consciously or unconsciously their attitude excites displeasure, and is characterised by the rulers of the country as one of growing insolence. It is a common thing to hear an English civilian now say, 'No one can have a more kindly feeling towards the natives of the country than I have; I like the people; I like the masses; I like the up-country natives; but I cannot endure the Baboos.' This puts the whole case in a nutshell. It is the Baboos who are the product of English education and civilisation. The Indian Civil Service as a body has no sympathy whatever with the aspirations of the educated portion of the native community. The dislike to the educated natives of India—of which the Ilbert Bill agitation was the outward and visible symbol—is now shared equally by all classes of Europeans. It is with a feeling of shame that I am bound to admit that the opposition to the Ilbert Bill was headed by members

of my own service, and that the unanimity of opposition to that measure was as complete among civilian magistrates and judges as it was among planters, merchants, and members of the legal profession.

*NON-INTERFERENCE AND ECONOMY.*

NO more complete type of a bureaucracy exists in the world than the Indian Government, and, like all other bureaucracies, its members are incessantly trying to justify their own existence by extending the sphere of their activity. This excessive State interference is now an extreme evil. In former times our predecessors in the administration of the country, with more practical sagacity than we possess, were always cautious in their interference, and instinctively favoured the adoption of Conservative principles. At the present day, when enormous advance has been made in the expansion of education, in the growth of political ideas, and in national development, the dead weight of administrative departments, needlessly multiplied, is profoundly prejudicial to real progress. Wise statesmanship would rather consist in the mere preservation of peace and order, and in the encouragement of spontaneous tendencies. What is needed is the pervading

presence of a spirit of relativity in the Government, of a capacity to refrain from unnecessary action, of an appreciation of the wide differences between the East and West, and between the different parts of India itself, and above all of a hearty sympathy with the wishes and interests of the governed. If these virtues are granted to our Indian rulers, we need not despair of seeing sound and healthy progress. But, unfortunately, these virtues are rare, and in their place a spirit is abroad breathing disturbance. Ambitious officials, whose tenure of office is short, are consumed with a fatal desire to distinguish themselves by the enforcement of their own ideas, irrespectively of the wishes and feelings of the people who are affected by them. I look with unconcealed misgiving on the restless proposals which are now so readily made by the young and irresponsible officials who advise the Government. I greatly fear that in our zeal for progress and reformation we are drifting into a campaign of executive and legislative action, the benefits of which are uncertain, while the certain result of it will be disturbance and ultimate retrogression. We are disturbing everything, and the Ilbert Bill agitation has thrown a lurid light on our intentions, which have been so much praised.

The experimental introduction of agrarian

theories into a country altogether unripe for their application, where the existence of an aristocratic community is still the material basis of order, and the maintenance of an hereditary landholding class is the very corner-stone of internal political reconstruction, is evidence of profound unfitness to appreciate adequately the necessities of the existing situation. Far from leading through any healthy channels to the settlement of disputes, experiments of this sort are calculated to produce nothing but disorder by setting up class against class in vain opposition to one another. The Bengal Tenancy Act, which has recently become law, admirably framed as it is in many respects, takes no regard of the social and political conditions of the provinces where it will be in force. The relationship between zemindar and ryots in Bengal is not the simple relationship of landlord and tenant. It is not merely that the zemindar collects the rents and the ryot pays them. The social aspects of the land tenure system of Bengal are not those of Ireland, or England, or of any country in Europe. The zemindar and ryot are as king and people ; they are as monarch and subject. Over most parts of Bengal it cannot be alleged that there are disputes, oppression, or poverty. It is true that rights are unadjusted, the balance of rent is undeter-

mined, the current demand is not fixed, the area of cultivation is often unknown; and yet it is not the case that the ordinary relations between zemindar and ryot are unfriendly. The narrow induction drawn by local officials from occasional disturbances which come to their notice misleads them, and has misled Government into the delusion that general disaffection exists. The one or two cases of disturbance come prominently to notice; the thousands and thousands of instances in which order and contentment prevail pass by unobserved. But the existing state of things, which is satisfactory because it is in accordance with the custom of the country and not objected to by any one, has already been gravely unsettled by the interference of zealous officials, who, with philanthropic motives no doubt, do not hesitate in their ignorant prejudice to brand a whole class of the community as inherently vicious, and who are incapable of recognising that the changes which must eventually take place ought to be allowed to arise spontaneously out of the circumstances in which the country is placed. The occasional agrarian demonstrations to which so much importance has unduly been attached have, for the most part, been stirred up by the injudicious action of Government officers, countenanced and encouraged by Government. It is certain that



the comparative degree of peace and prosperity which still prevails in the Bengal districts will no longer continue after the appearance of the revenue officer whom the new law brings into existence. The old policy of Government was to interfere as little as possible with the people ; and the attempt to reverse this policy will merely give rise to great local opposition, excite disputes, and kindle litigation. All that was variable and elastic will, under the new procedure, be stereotyped and fixed, and both parties will struggle with one another to the utmost in the civil courts in order that disputes may be decided; which would never have arisen if the surveyor's rod and settlement officer's registers had not galvanised them into life. It is difficult to over-estimate the bitterness of feeling which our interference will thus provoke. The evil will outweigh any administrative advantages derived from it, and I venture to think that most persons who are competent from their experience and knowledge to form an opinion on the subject will be found to agree with me in this conclusion, that the effect of our present legislation, whether it be or be not calculated to settle disputes where they already exist, is undoubtedly calculated where they do not to call them into existence.

The present policy of our Government is

equally injudicious in its interference with the economical conditions of the country. Those conditions vary from one another as widely as the *petite culture* of France differs from the system of large proprietary holdings and farms in England. And yet we insist upon introducing one nomenclature, to which, like the bed of Procrustes, we adapt all tenures, all holdings, all systems of settling the Government demand of revenue and rent. The words 'occupancy ryot' and 'tenure holder' have lain like the trail of a serpent over all the recent settlement proceedings of Bengal. These legislative fictions, which proceed on the assumption that what is true of a part of the province must be applicable to the whole, are the source of our difficulties. A blind adhesion to theoretic symmetry will always lead to practical confusion; and so it has come to pass that the action of Government has occasioned the most widespread dissatisfaction and discontent, that in hundreds and thousands of cases the Government has been plunged into litigation with its own tenantry, that the principal officers of the Revenue Department have been mobbed by despairing ryots in the streets of Calcutta, and that it has become necessary to revise the settlements, reduce the assessments, and remit revenue demands which ought never to have been made.

To one particular case I may be allowed to refer, for it is a case of which I possess a particular and exceptional knowledge. A controversy has lasted for many years regarding what is known as the Noabad settlement of Chittagong. For more than a century one invariable uniform procedure has been followed in regard to the assessment of waste lands brought under cultivation in this district. During this long period the Government has concluded about 50,000 petty settlements on one consistent principle. But that principle has now been completely reversed, and when I protested against the change I was called upon to show that Government was in any way pledged to follow the old procedure in future settlements. I replied then as I reply now, that I am not concerned to meet this challenge. If it is admitted that all these settlements have been concluded on one basis, it does not rest on any one to show that future settlements should be conducted on the same principle. I claim that there should be some continuity in administration, and that present and future Governments should show some respect for precedent, customs, and rights invariably recognised by their predecessors. I deprecate the shifts and changes to which it is so often proposed to subject our revenue policy as inevitably exercising a most injurious effect

upon the people who are the victims of our experiment. Is it to be supposed that such changes will play innocuously, so to speak, over the heads of the agricultural classes? This is assuredly the only aspect with which true statesmanship would concern itself; but by our revenue authorities it is too often wholly ignored, or buried away in a multitude of circular instructions which lead only to the increasing harassment of an already overburdened peasantry.

Even more serious cause for anxiety than the arbitrary decisions of a bureaucracy, which apparently considers that the vital interests of thousands of individuals are to be disposed of by means of logic-chopping, is the suppressed premise which runs through all our revenue policy that the soil of the country does not belong to the inhabitants of the country, but to Government. There is no great harm in saying that the land belongs to 'the State' when the State is only another name for the people, but it is very different when the State is represented by a small minority of foreigners, who disburse nearly one-third of the revenues received from the land on the remuneration of their own servants, and who have no abiding-place on the soil and no stake in the fortunes of the country. It is because we have acted on

this principle all over India, with the exception of the permanently settled districts, that we have reduced the agricultural classes to such poverty. By vigorously asserting the false principle that a party of foreign occupiers who choose to call themselves 'the State' have become the proprietors of the actual soil of India, we have destroyed all other rights of property therein, from the talookdar down to the ryot ; we have subverted the entire organisation of the village communities ; we have torn up by the roots the economical fabric by which the agricultural classes of the country were held together, and we have substituted in its place a costly and mechanical centralisation. Our Mogul predecessors were content to levy the State demand by simple processes which had grown up imperceptibly with the administration, and were sanctioned by immemorial usage. The harshness and cruelty of the Mogul tax-gatherers, on which we are too prone to dwell, were tempered by the contingency of migration, which effectually acted as a check upon oppressive landlords. The rapacity of Oriental despotism was restrained by the self-interest of those who were employed on the assessment and collection of the taxes. The old records of our English Government are full of evidence that the fixed and unbending system, which we introduced in

the place of existing arrangements was profoundly disliked by the people.<sup>1</sup> We aimed at an impossible perfection and mastery of detail: we have succeeded only in creating disturbance. It is only in Bengal, which for the most part has received the boon of a permanent settlement, that the people are not impoverished, and that measures of relief are not necessary. If, so surely as production increases, the Government demand be increased also, it is impossible to expect that the peasantry will labour for the improvement of the land or the extension of cultivation. There is no sense of security, which alone will attract capital and intelligence to agriculture. A bare margin for subsistence

<sup>1</sup> Take by way of illustration the following extract from Dr. Buchanan's *Statistical Survey*, Book IV., chap. vii., on the district of Dinagepore, which is quoted in the Fifth Report (1812): 'The natives allege that although they were often squeezed by the Mogul officers, and on all occasions were treated with the utmost contempt, they preferred suffering these evils to the mode that has been adopted of selling their lands when they fall into arrears, which is a practice they cannot endure. Besides, bribery went a great way on most occasions, and they allege that, bribes included, they did not actually pay one-half of what they do now.'

The subject of land revenue is excellently discussed in its general aspect in the chapter on the 'Land Tax of India,' which has been contributed by Col. Osborn, 'who has made the condition of the Indian peasantry as affected by British administration of the land revenue a special study,' to Major Evans Bell's *Life of General Briggs* (Chatto & Windus, 1885).

alone remains, and the result is that indebtedness extends year by year, and that famines recur with ever-increasing frequency and severity.

In a country like India, where almost the entire community is agricultural, all questions relating to land are of the most engrossing interest to the people, and the attitude of Government for good or evil is capable of exercising the most wide-reaching influence. There is no sphere in which, during the present period of transition, it is more necessary to abstain from interference. The most urgent need is the conservation of order. To this end we should allow free scope to the natural tendencies of the people to lean on an aristocracy above them for consolidation and guidance; we should forbear from casting about for every opportunity of exacting from the cultivators more and more of the fruits of their labour, and we should desist from fanciful innovations which always imply harassment and disturbance.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am glad to note the existence of a more healthy tone now prevailing in the Agricultural Department of the Government of India. All attempt to lead has at last been given up, and the avowed object is now little more than the orderly arrangement of agricultural facts, from which the awakened intelligence of the native community will in due course derive not only improvements in practical agriculture, but it is to be hoped also sound legislation. The Bengal Tenancy Act, whatever else it may have been, was the result of ignorance and disorderly investigation. If the Revenue and Agricultural De-

But it is not in the direction of land administration only that I deprecate a restless policy. Speaking generally on this subject of State intervention, I will say that the proper procedure is, in my opinion, to wait, and in the most conservative spirit watch over and foster every

partment succeeds in laying a foundation of knowledge, and in enlisting the sympathy of native gentlemen in the improvement of the agricultural classes by assisting them to better knowledge, it will not have been constituted in vain. But this, it is hardly necessary to say, was not the object of the department when it was first organised.

The following remarks from one of Lord Ripon's resolutions (dated December 8, 1881) ought never to be forgotten by the responsible officers of this department: 'The Government of India desires to express its conviction that, in dealing with agricultural improvement, the earliest ambition of the Agricultural Department should be to secure the active aid of those members of the native community who are sincerely interested in agriculture. It is, after all, only through and by the native community that agricultural improvements can on any important scale be effected. Native gentlemen have experience and facilities for extending improvements which no official can hope to obtain, while in many provinces they have a large amount of capital available for investment in agricultural enterprise. They are familiar with the usages of the cultivating classes. They understand the existing system of Indian agriculture, and they are often acquainted with the local reasons which justify practices that may seem strange and illogical to a European observer. They can, therefore, best guide the course of agricultural improvement with the least disturbance of existing circumstances, and develop the true policy of progress in improving and adding to indigenous conditions, without that subversion of ideas and methods which is likely to accompany the introduction of exotic reforms.'



indigenous effort to right matters, to restore life from without, to infuse in this way confidence among the people themselves, and then to build up a political order upon existing foundations which shall eventually be able to stand by itself with increasing stability. These remarks are of easy application to particular cases, but especially they will apply to the local self-government laws which have lately been passed by Government. The principle of local self-government ought to be extended in India gradually, to selected localities first, and afterwards to others, but in all cases with perfect confidence and in an ungrudging spirit. To enforce the principle wholesale in all places, and then to impose on it close and intolerable restrictions, is to ensure its failure. It will be hopeless to expect any real development of local self-government if local bodies are subjected to check and interference in matters of detail. The assistance and support of Government should be given, in Lord Ripon's words, 'in the manner best calculated to preserve the Commissioners' freedom of action within the limits of their attributions, and not to weaken their self-reliance.' These are the principles of local self-government, as they were enunciated by their sponsors in the Government of India. We cannot too loudly join in the denunciation of a

policy which not only deviates from them, but is designed, if we may judge from its outward and visible manifestation in special cases, to crush every spontaneous formation as it arises, while at the same time professing to encourage local initiative. •

Freedom from official tutelage is now essential to the healthy and independent growth of the Indian people. This fact cannot be enunciated too often or too distinctly. It is the more necessary to dwell upon it as, from the nature of the case, it is a principle very repugnant to the rising, ambitious, and energetic advisers of Government, who, as Lord Elgin once remarked in somewhat homely language, are 'instinctively in favour of a good row.' At the same time, it is no less necessary to insist on the sister principle of economy. Decreasing activity in all the departmental bureaux must be accompanied by increasing economy in the departmental administration. The administration of India by Englishmen has the fatal defect of being too expensive. At all times, and especially since it has been under the Queen's government, India has cost more to govern than it yields in revenue. At all times the English exchequer in India has been in deficit. At no time has it defrayed the full charges of a single year out of a single year's regularly recurring

revenue. It is true that a surplus of income over expenditure, with sometimes a partial reduction of debt, has on one or two rare occasions been claimed ; but these affectations of surplus are found on examination to be, like Pyrrhic victories, more discouraging than disaster itself. Our Indian financiers are fond of the old excuse of the spendthrift, who maintains that if this and that item were not counted his expenditure would not be greater than his income. And so at one time famine is relied on as the cause of all deficiencies ; at another time it is opium ; at another it is the loss upon exchange ; at another time it is the exceptional cost which has been incurred on building barracks ; at another it is war. ' We cannot,' said Sir Ashley Eden in 1880, ' close our eyes to the fact that, if it were not for the exceptional expenditure of the Afghanistan war, the financial position of India would be excellent ; and with this fact before us, I must say that the agitation which has been got up in England, with the view of stopping expenditure on public works, is mischievous and short-sighted to the last degree.' As though the expenditure which an aggressive foreign policy involved could prudently be kept out of the accounts of the nation ! and as though the outlay on so-called reproductive works was not

the first among the sources of excessive expenditure under which the country labours ! It is mainly on this account that the debt has been raised during the past twenty-five years from 90,000,000*l.* to 162,500,000*l.*, and if guarantees and indirect charges are included amounts to 242,250,000*l.* The loans, as is well known, are raised in England, only about 10 per cent. of India stock being held by natives of the country.<sup>1</sup> The interest on this debt constitutes the main item of the home charges, which now stand at a total of 17,000,000*l.* sterling, annually remitted by the taxpayers of India to English creditors. It is from this cause alone that the unfavourable exchange weighs so intolerably on India. The country is too poor to pay for its elaborate railway system and irrigation projects, and, being compelled to borrow in England, has incurred an ever-accumulating debt at what has unfortunately proved to be an ever-increasing rate of interest. It is this most serious drain on her finances that influenced Mr. Gladstone

<sup>1</sup> The official figures furnished to me at the India Office show the estimated amount of Indian rupee debt held by natives of India at Rs. 24,64,10,000. The accuracy of these figures is very doubtful ; it will, I believe, be found that a great part of the rupee debt held by natives consists of investments made by the Court of Wards, which is a department of Government, and of deposits, which are made by native officials as security for their good behaviour.

when he wrote that 'the aspect of Indian finance grows gloomier instead of brighter, and brings back to the minds of those few who care for past or future the declaration of Sir Robert Peel, that in the well-being of Indian finance British finance had a substantial concern.' It is literally true that the 'reproductive public works' of India, far from paying their own interest, in many cases do not pay for their working expenses, and have proved largely instrumental in driving the finances of the country into their present unsatisfactory condition. If some of the great irrigation works, especially in Southern India, have been magnificently successful, it is no less the case that irrigation projects have been extended elsewhere to tracts of country where they are altogether unnecessary and unsuitable; while the interest payable on the cost of their construction remains a heavy annual tax on provinces which can profit nothing from them. These works are too often a source of oppression to the people whose lands are irrigated. The rapid extension of the railway system all over India may be justified by pointing to the immense assistance which railway communication affords in dealing with famine. But from a purely financial point of view it involves an amount of outlay which the country is incapable of making

remunerative. Even the old-established lines which tap the most fertile and productive districts, and which connect the most populous and wealthy trading cities with the sea-coast, yield only a precarious profit. They prosper when their receipts are swollen by the returns from famine or war traffic. There is too much reason to believe that they have, by the obstruction to drainage which they cause in some places, materially injured the general health of the population. The new lines now under construction and contemplation, which, if I may use the metaphor, break up inferior soil, are naturally supported by the local officials, whose isolated position is ameliorated by railway extension, and by engineering authorities for whom the railways find employment. The promoters of these railways, who most loudly insist on the profitable character of their speculations, are not, however, really deceived, for they will not invest their money without a guarantee from Government and other substantial privileges. If they believed in their experiments they would proceed in them without Government assistance. This is the crucial test in all such cases. The assurance that railways will develop the resources of the country is an altogether insufficient warrant for their construction. The proper course is to abandon the project to private enterprise.

If intending investors have confidence in their own glowing anticipations, they may be left to incur responsibility as well as enjoy profits. The Government, for its own part, should refrain from further railway extension, which cannot be shown to be necessary for the prevention of famine.

Upon other subjects of expenditure I need not repeat what has already been well said by others. I need not dwell on the excessive military expenditure, which now reaches nearly 20,000,000*l.*, and enjoys the 'melancholy distinction of being probably the highest except one in the world.' Nor need I linger over the increased outlay—in some cases culpably increased—in civil branches of the administration. It is sufficient to remark that there is a tendency towards increasing expenditure in all departments.

To meet this expenditure, which the country does not require and the people cannot afford, new taxes have to be enforced; we have been doing nothing but devising taxes since the great mutiny. The country calls for rest, but we insist upon the continuance of an unparalleled era of fiscal disquietude. 'We have had,' writes a recent Calcutta Reviewer, 'in ten years six different Stamp Acts; the second tinkering the first, the third repealing both, the fourth repealing half the third, the fifth repealing the other

half, the sixth repealing the fourth, and all these six ignoring the previous old one, which had done duty for half a century.' Assessed taxes have been seven times recast, and each modification has involved a new harassing series of assessments of incomes. The municipal laws are designed to afford innumerable opportunities for taxation. The imposition of local cesses is rightly or wrongly regarded as a direct breach of faith on the part of Government towards the most influential section of the native community in Bengal. Resettlements and survey, with their symbols of oppression, the measuring rod and compass; the irritation of invariable enhancement, and of incessant local inquiries for land under-assessed, however small; the realisation of Government demands by summary process and the unbending severity of the sale, warrant, and certificate procedures—all these are measures now resorted to with greater frequency than formerly, with greater harshness and more persistence. The ryots cry aloud for bread, and we have given them a volume of new laws to comfort them. The statute-book grows exceedingly. From an object of wonder it has become an object of suspicion and distrust. It is vain to appeal to our good intentions. The people judge those intentions by what they see of their effect in practice, and find



them bad. 'A feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction exists among every class, both European and native, on account of the constant increase of taxation which has for years been going on. My belief is that the continuance of that feeling is a political danger, the magnitude of which can hardly be over-estimated.' These words of Lord Mayo should be engraved on tablets of brass over the council-chambers of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, and Simla, as the speech of the Emperor Claudius was engraved at Lugdunum. It is useless to affirm that where there is a civilised Government you must trust that Government to some extent. It is not to the point that, in the opinion of a distinguished Lieutenant-Governor, the Government is not blameworthy, or indeed that it is 'one of the fairest Governments in the world.' The one truth is, that we are mistrusted by our subject people, and that the natives of India do not hesitate to accuse the Government of systematically abusing its powers. 'What next, and next?' and 'Why and wherefore?' are not unreasonable questions to be put by taxpayers; and when the answer vouchsafed is unintelligible to the questioner, who has to pay nevertheless, is it surprising that the motives of the tax-gatherer should be subjected to suspicion?

The Government of India is now at its

wits' end to devise new methods of taxation : its resources are admittedly exhausted, and, like the spendthrift in private life, it is only able to maintain a temporary equilibrium between revenue and expenditure by raising new loans. 'The immediate financial outlook is so uncertain that the Finance Minister has been obliged to confess that he could not approximately calculate the income required to meet the necessary expenditure of Government. Increase in taxation being, however, impossible, the only alternative is retrenchment. The whole financial policy of the Government should now be wrapped up in this word—retrenchment. Retrenchment circulars are indeed issued almost as regularly as the yearly budget, but it is a half-hearted economy only that is inculcated, and in point of fact there has never been any appreciable reduction of expenditure. What is needed is something more thorough, more radical in treatment than has yet suggested itself to the Government at Simla. It is not the abolition or reduction of a few ministerial officers, or the substitution of a cheaper and inferior stationery for that before in use, or even the general suspension of all unnecessary public works, or the introduction of a few native gentlemen into subordinate judicial offices that had previously been held by the sons and nephews of members

of the Civil Service—it is not by temporising arrangements of this sort that we can meet the urgency of so great a crisis. We must be prepared to face a complete change of policy—not only to practise cheeseparing in details, and to put down nepotism and jobbery in high places, but to reorganise our whole method of Government upon a new and cheaper basis. The cost of British officers is too great ; their salaries are too high ; and the blessings of European civilisation that they introduce are luxuries beyond the means of the people. India can no more afford the privilege of being governed by foreigners, can no more pay for her gigantic system of railways, her palatial barracks and other public buildings, than English farmers can afford to plough with racehorses, or the Indian ryot with elephants. The only remedy is to replace European by native administration. It is incumbent on the Government, if it is really serious in its economical professions, to place the internal administration of the country more and more in the hands of natives.

*ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM.*

THE key-note of internal reform is the gradual substitution of native for European official agency. This is the one end towards which the educated natives are concentrating their efforts ; the concession of this demand is the only way by which we can make any pretence of satisfying even the most moderate of their legitimate aspirations. It is the first and most pressing duty the Government is called on to discharge.

It is necessary as an economic measure. But it is necessary also on higher grounds than those of economy. I, indeed, am not a man to depreciate the administrative qualities of my own countrymen. In the words of Lord Lytton, I may say that 'I speak of what I know by my own experience, and have seen with my own eyes. No body of men in the world ever conferred more splendid benefits upon any community.' I have seen too much, been too long brought into contact with the admirable

work done by my predecessors and colleagues to feel any doubt of the energy, probity, and sincerity of our young English magistrates, or of the zeal with which they devote themselves to the public service. I do not suppose that, with all their natural and acquired advantages, the natives of the country will off-hand administer their own affairs as efficiently as they are now administered by Englishmen. This is a point on which I desire to avoid misconstruction. So far as I know, no equality is claimed. But from the essential circumstances of the case, due to the constitution of a foreign government and alien administration, the British officials labour under disqualifications for which the general excellence of their work can afford no compensation. The members of the Civil Service, when very young and very ignorant of the language, are vested with magisterial powers beyond comparison greater than those possessed by corresponding functionaries under any civilised Government, and being uncontrolled by public opinion, and with little public experience, they are liable to be in some measure inclined towards undue severity. Their faults are for the most part the faults of youth. There is, however, no reason why in India, more than in any other part of the world, important judicial and executive functions should be discharged

by persons of unripe age, and it is an obvious reflection in favour of the employment of the natives of the country that they can be vested with the appropriate powers when age and experience may be accepted as a guarantee for the proper exercise of authority.<sup>1</sup> It is apparent, also, that while natives of mature age will work for less pay than youthful Europeans, their knowledge of the language and customs of the country gives them in other respects an immense advantage. Natives do not require to take long furloughs to Europe to recruit their strength; their thoughts are not unceasingly distracted by interests and associations wholly foreign to their country and the work in hand; they have, of necessity, a more perfect insight into the character and conduct of the people. However great the merits of European officers

<sup>1</sup> It is a marked defect under our present administration, that natives also are now vested with magisterial powers at too early an age. Considerations of climate render it necessary that Englishmen should go to India while they are very young; but there is no reason whatever why natives of the country should be made magistrates at the unripe age of twenty-one or twenty-two years. Yet this is almost invariably done, and there is actually a rule that no native shall be eligible for the appointment of deputy or assistant magistrate if he is above the age of twenty-five years. In this respect the Indian Government is blinded by the example of the Civil Service, forgetful of the fact that that service is an organisation of foreigners, and that the deficiencies of that organisation should be corrected, not copied, when foreigners are not concerned.

may be, they can never be so great as to counter-balance advantages like these.<sup>1</sup> The superiority of the natives of the country in administering law and justice to their own people is, indeed, a fact that cannot be seriously disputed. The intellectual attainments and high moral virtues of Dwarkanath Mitter sufficiently vindicate the competence of natives to exercise the most responsible judicial functions. He sat for many years upon the Bench of the High Court of Judicature in Bengal. Other native gentlemen

<sup>1</sup> 'Few worse Governments can be devised than one in which the governors are launched into office at an immature age; and when years and practice have refined their judgment and qualified them for their task, they make way for others to renew the same process—make their mistakes, learn wisdom and spend the wisdom acquired in an idle and objectless existence in another sphere, or, in the best contingency, not in the service of those at whose expense they have acquired it. The constant change of governors and their unripeness are ever-recurring topics of remark in the discussions on our Government; and I find the judgment of an acute and not unfriendly native statesman is to the effect that in the inability to settle in India lies the most insuperable objection to our rule.

'He (Sir Salar Jung) thought, speaking of the great animosity against us, that the answer might partly be found in this—viz. "that none of our predecessors ever were so utterly foreign to the country as we are; that with all their faults they settled among and amalgamated themselves with the people, which we, with all our virtues, could never do. This he seems to think is the most insuperable of all the objections against our rule." (East Indian Systems of Government, p. 73.) — Quoted from Dr. Congreve's pamphlet on *India*, published in 1857 and reprinted in 1872.

might also be mentioned, who before and after him have occupied the same post and acquitted themselves with credit. At the same time the judicial appointments in the lower grades of the service are already filled by natives, and there is abundant testimony to show that they discharge their duties with integrity and ability. No authority on this subject could be higher than that of the late Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Selborne, who on a recent occasion spoke as follows<sup>1</sup> from his place in Parliament:—

My lords, for some years I practised in Indian cases before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and during those years there were few cases of any imperial importance in which I was not concerned. I had considerable opportunities of observing the manner in which, in civil cases, the native judges did their duty, and I have no hesitation in saying—and I know this was also the opinion of the Judges during that time—that the judgments of the native judges bore most favourable comparison, as a general rule, with the judgments of the English judges. I should be sorry to say anything in disparagement of English judges, who, as a class, are most anxious carefully to discharge their duty ; but I repeat that I have no hesitation in saying that in every instance, in respect of integrity, of learning, of knowledge, of the soundness and satisfactory character of the judgments arrived at, the native judgments were quite as good as those of English judges.

<sup>1</sup> As reported in the *Times*, April 10, 1883.



In the highest departments of the judicial service, as well as in the lowest, the employment of natives is admitted to be a successful experiment. The principle, therefore, for which I contend has already been accepted : yet if any proposal be made to go further, to appoint natives to the higher executive as well as to judicial offices, to appoint native magistrates and collectors as well as native civil judges, it is greeted with an outcry of disapprobation. When recommendations are made for appointing natives to judicial posts, there seems to be an idea underlying the proposal that this branch of the service chiefly demands those intellectual qualities in which natives excel ; whereas the executive branch demands qualities other than intellectual, such as energy, decision, self-reliance, power of combination and organisation, of managing men, and so forth, which are deemed to be qualities as yet imperfectly developed in natives. Therefore it seems to be thought better to refrain from placing natives in the higher class of executive posts, which, according to this view, ought to be reserved almost exclusively for Europeans. This is a fair statement of the argument of persons opposed to any reform in the present system. The natives are assumed to be unfit to have charge of districts ; it is convenient to assume that all Englishmen are

cool and wise in danger, while no natives are so, and that consequently only Englishmen and no natives are competent to be trusted with independent charge. By a process of the grossest self-adulation we persuade ourselves to believe that natives are only useful as ministerial servants, but that the work of a district, if it is to be done at all, demands the supervision of an English officer. The truth, however, is that the natives, as of course they must be, are the backbone of our administration. The burden and heat of the day are already borne by native subordinates, and in the event (as occasionally must be the case) of an incompetent European being in charge of a district, the whole of the work is done by his native deputies and clerks.

It is, moreover, expedient that the accession of native officials to the ranks of the executive service should be encouraged, even at the cost of some temporary inefficiency of administration. Lord Ripon justly urges on behalf of his own scheme of local self-government, that it will be an instrument of political education.<sup>1</sup> And it

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 5 of a resolution published by the Government of India in May 1882 observes : ' At the outset the Governor-General in Council must explain that in advocating an extension of local self-government, and the adoption of this principle in the management of many local affairs, he does not suppose that the work will be, in the first instance, better done than if it remained in the sole hands of the Government district

may be as truly said, that if we desire to eventually establish an independent government, we can only do so by training the people to a sense of self-help and self-reliance through familiarity with the details of executive work.

It may be added that as the judicial functions are superior to magisterial duties, so it is important that the powers of the magistrate should be entrusted to natives before those of the judge. I am careful to affirm the necessity of keeping for a time in our own hands the power of check and control, revision and appeal ; but there is no corresponding reason why all the real business of administration should be retained. On the contrary, it is desirable that, during the temporary period of transition upon which we are now fairly launched, the English Government should at every possible oppor-

officers. It is not primarily with a view to improvement in administration that this measure is put forward and supported ; it is chiefly desirable as an instrument of popular political education. His Excellency in Council has himself no doubt that, as local knowledge and interest are brought to bear more fully upon local administration, improved efficiency will in fact follow. But at starting there will doubtless be many failures calculated to discourage exaggerated hopes, and even in some cases to cast apparent discredit upon the principle of self-government itself.'

These remarks have been sneered at as sentimental and ill-judged rhetoric ; they seem to me to be the utterance of sound statesmanship.

tunity invest the native officials with executive duties, and so educate them onwards until they are able to undertake higher responsibilities. The gradual withdrawal of our interference in Indian affairs should rather be marked by our systematic resignation of executive functions than by the relinquishment of judicial appointments which carry with them the right of appellate and revisional jurisdiction.

A worldly-wise policy would also induce the Government to entrust executive duties to native hands. The existing system of administration presents the somewhat anomalous appearance of executive work done by officials of the ruling race, while the natives of the country sit in judgment on the work so done, and naturally subject it to free and often hostile criticism. Great friction is occasionally caused by the exercise of this right of criticism ; and although on the whole its influence is beneficial, it cannot be denied that it is one of the means by which a raw is kept up between European officialism and the native public. How obvious seems the suggestion to transfer the duties which excite so much animadversion from Europeans to natives, and to leave the native press to sit as a tribunal over the official peccadilloes, not of Europeans, but of its own countrymen !

This aspect of the case is well considered in

a pamphlet<sup>1</sup> recently published in Calcutta. The author of this pamphlet, with whom I am in almost entire accord, writes thus :—

The Indian community, in tastes, in interests, in intellectual attainments, in desire for progress, is broken up into countless divisions and subdivisions ; and as soon as its members are entrusted with the powers and responsibilities of administration, all these diversities and rivalries at once come to the surface. Politically the true *rôle* of Englishmen in the India of the future should be that of arbitrators between rival sections and interests of the native community—a *rôle* which by their natural qualities they are well qualified to discharge. Who that has any experience of dealing with native gentlemen charged with administrative functions has not seen numerous occasions on which the opinions of one or two Europeans present are eagerly sought for, and allowed to turn the scale at once between contending parties ? As the natives of India gain a larger and larger share in the administrative work of the country, the fire of criticism, which is now concentrated on the European functionaries, will be directed against one another, and they will fall into groups and parties as numerous as are the separate interests involved, all of which may, if wisely handled, be permeated by a common devotion to a common country.

Repress educated natives, distrust them, let them see that the policy of India for the Indians and of training them to administer their own country is a

<sup>1</sup> *Ought Natives to be welcomed as Volunteers?* By 'Trust and Fear not.' Calcutta : Thacker Spink, 1885.

fiction, and you weld them all into one solid phalanx, united by the common bond of despair and hatred towards Europeans. Can any policy be more insensate than this? But open the door to their ambitions, and you at once let in all the emulations, class interests, sectional friction, which, if not in themselves good, are at any rate a necessary element in a healthy state of society, and instead of a solid phalanx you have a crowd of aspirants competing with one another under conditions which the Government will prescribe, and in a race of which it will be the umpire and the distributor of the prizes.

These excellent observations afford, I conceive, the strongest common-sense argument in favour of the delegation of executive and administrative power to natives. It is necessary to do so on grounds of economy, it is necessary as a concession to the reasonable and natural aspirations of the natives of the country, and it is no less necessary from a common-sense point of view in furtherance of a wise and harmonious administration.

In any case the Indian Civil Service as at present constituted is doomed. It is a fine old service, and has enrolled within its ranks men of whom the mother country may well be proud. An appointment in that service implies a position of trust and influence, the exercise of power and responsibility, a capacity for good or evil, which are altogether beyond the range of ordinary

mortals in work-day life. It is a service organised with consummate skill by our early administrators, and especially by Lord Cornwallis, who may be said to have placed it upon its present footing. The arrangement of districts with a population of from one to three million of inhabitants, and an area of from two thousand to ten thousand square miles, over which a single officer presides ; in whom all authority is centralised ; by whom the working of all departments is controlled and brought to a common action ; to whom the civil surgeon, the district superintendent of police, the engineer, and a large staff of assistants and deputies exercising magisterial, executive, and revenue functions, are all carefully subordinated with almost martial precision ; who is himself the hand and eye of Government ; upon whose resource, efficiency, and presence of mind may often depend the happiness of multitudes of human beings—this is indeed a vigorous and effective administrative conception, a monument to the organising ability of those who devised it. It is, however, an organisation suited only to a Government of foreigners, to an administration both alien and autocratic. Any Government which is at the same time popular and national must find expression in a form of administration more representative and less concentrated in individuals.

Representation, in the English sense of election by vote, is not so much what is wanted as the selection of representative members of the community, who will possess the highest possible qualifications for the discharge of local duties. The scheme of local self-government adopted by Lord Ripon does not altogether meet the requirements now called for. It rests upon an elective basis, and is vitiated by the chief cause of the imperfection of popular local institutions, the low calibre of the men by whom affairs are carried on. The success of the scheme will depend very largely upon the caution and prudence with which it is introduced. But, notwithstanding its defects, it is a decided step in the right direction of delegating the administration of local affairs to local bodies, who, however inferior they may be to the district officers in knowledge of the principles of administration, have the compensating advantage of a far more direct interest in the result. In the natural course of things the local administration will be chosen from the permanent residents of the locality. The constant habit of transfers and changes which is the bane of the present form of administration will cease. The interests of efficiency and economy will alike be served by the appointment of natives on the spot to perform functions



for which we now import foreigners from Europe, and natives brought from every other part of the country than that in which they are to be employed.

The people of India possess an instinctive capacity for local self-government, which centuries of misrule have not eradicated. The inhabitants of an Indian village under their own princes formed a sort of petty republic, the affairs of which were managed by hereditary officers, any unfit person being set aside by popular judgment in favour of a more acceptable member of his family. It is by reason of the British administration only that the popular authority of the village headman has been sapped, that the responsibility of the village accountant and record keeper has been destroyed, and the judicial powers of the *Punchayat*, or Committee of Five, subverted. A costly and mechanical centralisation took the place of a system of local self-government and local arbitration. The old order can of course never be restored in its integrity, but the development of local institutions which Lord Ripon's policy contemplates is designed to reconcile, if possible, the traditional forms of native authority with the wants of a modern civilisation. The administration is to be localised, and the trading, manufacturing, and banking classes, no less than

the agricultural, are to be again endowed with corporate life.

As it is the development of local independence and self-government which more than anything else has given stability to the political institutions of England, so it is by a system of localised administration that we may hope for improvement and stability in the political institutions of India. We have sown throughout the Empire the seeds of representative government, and it remains to foster their growth. But it is not only local self-government that must be encouraged. As intelligence spreads, the Councils which assist the Lieutenant-Governors of provinces, and no less the Supreme Council, must change from a consultative to a representative character. The constitution of these Councils has lately attracted much attention in the native press, and I sincerely trust that public opinion will not cease to express itself on the subject until some radical and thorough reform has been effected. It is not too much to say that the present constitution of the Legislative Councils is the merest farce. Not only do officials predominate to an extent which absolutely precludes the possibility of any independent action, but these officials consist almost entirely of individuals who, from the very position they hold, are unable to display any per-

sonal independence. The present native members of the Councils are little more than puppets. A native deputy magistrate is not inclined to offer advice unacceptable to a Lieutenant-Governor to whom he owes the honour of his appointment, and on whom he depends for his prospects in the service. The excellent and faithful agents of the rich and powerful zemindars, who now enjoy a seat in the Bengal Council, would as soon bite off their own tongues as place themselves in opposition to Sir Rivers Thompson. No blame to them. They act in accordance with the antecedents of their own order, and of their fellow-countrymen of the old style. The very essence of their creed is subservience to authority. Is there one among their friends and associates who would justify their action if they were to place themselves in opposition? The real leaders of the country find no voice in the councils of Government, which is either ignorant of their existence, or, if it knows of them, is scrupulously careful to offer them no official recognition. Even if the Lieutenant-Governor were to take trouble and endeavour to nominate for his Council one or two Bengalee gentlemen who really do represent the intelligence and thought of the country, it is very doubtful whether the experiment would altogether succeed. How can it be expected that a mere nominee of

Government will continue to prove independent? The only chance of obtaining the ablest and most independent members of the native community as members of Council is by the organisation of some system by which the leaders of the people will be able to elect among themselves a fitting representative. The system of nomination must now be practically superseded by that of representation. That is the only efficacious remedy. It has already been tried with conspicuous success in the selection of members of the Legislative Council of the Supreme Government. The successful start which has there been made is evidence of the feasibility of extending the principle of representation to the Local Councils. The late lamented Baboo Kisto Das Pal, and his successor, Baboo Peary Mohun Mookherjee, have worthily represented the landholders of Bengal, and there could be no more fitting representative of the best members of his own class than Mr. Gibbon.

It is useless at present considering details; but it is reasonable that the Government should still be allowed to nominate a proportion—say one third—of the members of the Council. If the number of the members of a Legislative Council were fixed at thirty, there would then be twenty members left to be chosen by the people from among themselves. In such a

representation the metropolis of the province should receive at least five members. There is no capital in the world which wields a greater influence in the country than Calcutta does, and yet Calcutta is at present not represented by a single member in the Council of its own province. The Universities should return their own separate members. For the rest, the provinces might be lumped together by districts, and each circle might then return two, three, or four members, in proportion to its importance, to be elected by the members of the District and Municipal Boards within the local area concerned.

If the will exists, there need be no difficulty in the settlement of details. What is wanted is to ensure the adequate and proper representation of the educated portion of the community. At the same time, when the constitution of the Councils is thus changed, their functions also should be modified to some extent. A representative Council ought to be able to exercise some check on the executive administration, and in order to secure this object the right of interpellation and of calling for papers ought to be allowed. The right of exercising some financial control must also be admitted. Vast sums of money are now annually spent—I had almost said wasted—on enterprises which ex-

clusively affect the interests of the people of the country, but in regard to which the people are altogether unrepresented. It is essential that such expenditure should not be incurred without subjecting the estimates and also the need of the work to intelligent public criticism. Lastly, it may be added that the success of the local District Boards is dependent on the completeness and efficiency with which they are themselves represented in the Councils of Government. A protection of this character is absolutely necessary in the face of the interference with which they will otherwise be constantly visited by the local officials who are at present vested with a most dangerous authority in this respect. It is only when the native element in the Provincial Councils is endowed with political independence that the freedom and dignity of the Local Boards will be adequately secured. Responsibility will then be fixed more and more on individuals, and the scandal of personal nepotism and jobbery will be diminished. It is quite as important a matter to establish these principles as it is to ensure that the constitution of the Councils shall be reorganised on a sound and healthy representative basis.

*PUBLIC OPINION IN ENGLAND, AND  
THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT.*

IT should be a source of unfeigned satisfaction to persons interested in India that closer attention is now given in England to Indian affairs. This closer attention exercises a valuable influence : our own moral sense is awakened by increased knowledge ; more adequate knowledge of actual facts is accompanied by a livelier consciousness of deficiency and of increased responsibility. On the other hand, our Indian fellow-subjects are clear gainers from the stimulus which their rulers receive from the beneficial action of public opinion in Europe.

I am not disposed to overrate the value of such influence, and I am free to admit that the most active manifestations of English opinion have often been actuated by race animosity. But even in such cases I do say that English opinion is able to exercise a beneficial influence in comparison with Anglo-Indian opinion in India. It finds utterance in more moderate and decorous language. , No vulgar abuse of,

natives,<sup>1</sup> such as lately has swept over Bengal, would be tolerated in any newspapers or public meetings in this country. Distance from the scene enables men to judge of events with less excitement and irritability. It is not long also before 'the inevitable reaction follows. Every

<sup>1</sup> In order that my English readers may be able to form some idea of the language which Anglo-Indian journals are not ashamed to use, I give below an extract from the *Bengal Times*, which appeared in June 1885, long after the excitement which accompanied the Ilbert Bill agitation may be supposed to have died out:—

' Baboo Lal Mohun Ghosh has decided to accept the invitation of the Deptford 400 to become the Liberal candidate for the representation of their new borough. It is not too much to say that this rabid worthless mob of four hundred is more fit for the inside of a lunatic asylum than for catering for the political well-being of our native land. If a Bengalee Baboo can enter Parliament, it will soon become a favourite resort for Aryans. In an insensate idiotic thirst for novelty, where will an English mob stop? Could a chimpanzee be trained to stand for a borough, doubtless he would be found to have an excellent chance with a county constituency. And perhaps a chimpanzee would be a cleverer animal than this Ghosh Baboo, whose publicly uttered sentiments in Dacca obtained for him the distinguishing title of polecat. Thank Heaven, four hundred do not represent an English constituency, and the Baboo may find to his cost that at the last moment the English nationality has revived. In such a case his insolence and presumption in seeking a seat in Parliament would be fitly rewarded by an infuriate crowd of roughs. We would effectually dispose of every Bengalee scoundrel who dared to aspire to an Englishwoman for a wife; while any Englishwoman who married a native should, in our opinion, be publicly exhibited as a shameless abandoned woman, a reproach to her sex, and a disgrace to her nation.'



year there is an addition to the number of authorities who avow doctrines which were formerly condemned as unpatriotic and unreasonable, and who in their appeal to a higher tribunal than national self-love are gradually leavening the tone of public opinion by their persistent enthusiasm, and profoundly modifying existing conceptions.

Some of the best books about India have been written by men who have no official concern with the country, who have perhaps never even visited it, and who derive all their knowledge of it from indirect sources. Such books will often contain more valuable reflections on the nature of our administration of India, on the constitution of our Empire, on the effects of our rule, and on the dangers (external and internal) which may befall it; and they offer also more valuable suggestions in regard to the future of India than are usually to be found in similar books put forth by Indian officials of the widest experience. There is an advantage in being untrammelled by official antecedents. The opinions of those who have passed long years of service in India are unconsciously weighed down and narrowed by a bias derived from their whole life and environment. Many admirable books about India have, indeed, been written by Anglo-Indians, officials and non-

officials ; but it happens that the tendency of officials is to exalt unduly the excellence of the work on which they have been themselves engaged, and so err on the side of excessive self-laudation. It results from this unfortunate but natural tendency, that it is necessary to make a wide allowance for the optimistic character of most Anglo-Indian writers, and the higher the official rank of the authority the more sure is he to be an apologist, or perhaps biographer, of his own administration, and the more needful it is to discount his conclusions. The exceptions of such men as Lobb and Geddes, who died before they could accomplish their work, or of Major Evans-Bell, or Mr. Hume, or Colonel Osborn, who, in their retirement, devote their unflagging energies to the true interests of India, do not affect the general truth of my statement. The fact remains that it is not in the volumes annually published by Anglo-Indian administrators or missionaries that we may look for any glimmer of insight into that utter derangement of economical and social conditions which our conquest has wrought, and which is the chief cause of the pauperisation of the people. Nor is it likely that in these volumes we shall find any perception of the deteriorating effect wrought upon both conquerors and conquered by the anoma-

lous relations existing between them. These are elements of cardinal importance in considering whether, on the whole, our presence in India has been for good or for evil. And yet their very existence is commonly ignored in the writings of official apologists. The pessimist writers who have the courage and ability to express their opinions discharge, therefore, a useful function, which will continue to be necessary so long as officials like Mr. Justice Stephen and Sir Lepel Griffin continue to maintain that our Indian government is the most beneficent, most perfect, and most unalterable that can be imagined. But the work of Mr. Hyndman, Mr. Keay, or Mr. Connell is at the best but critical only; it may wither and destroy, but it does not replace. The real need of India is reconstruction; and it is the special value of such utterances as those of Osborn, Caird, and Blunt—and particularly of Dr. Congreve's pamphlet on India, and the treatise on India in the 'English Citizen' series,<sup>1</sup> both written by gentlemen who have no personal knowledge of India—that being composed without prejudice, and with an adequate knowledge of the facts of the case, they fall neither into the Scylla of pessimism nor the more awful

<sup>1</sup> *Colonies and Dependencies*, Part I., India, by J. S. Cotton (Macmillan, 1883).

Charybdis of bombast, and lead directly to the formation of administrative principles on which a reconstructive policy can be based.

I have mentioned the names of Messrs. Hyndman and Keay, and I do so with respect, although I cannot agree in all their conclusions. Mr. Connell's writings on Indian railways are more valuable than those of the men with whose names I have associated his. Sir James Caird's book is full of useful and practical suggestions. The recent articles of Mr. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt in the 'Fortnightly Review' are conspicuous illustrations of keen insight into the real relations between England and India. The outburst of indignation they excited among Anglo-Indians is an instructive contrast to the impression they created among the native community, which was briefly one of mingled surprise and gratification that an Englishman who had travelled in India should have been able so thoroughly to understand and represent things as they exist. The late Mr. Fawcett, whose premature death all India mourns, devoted the whole of his great influence to the interests of India in this country. I may cite names even greater than these. Edmund Burke will always be pre-eminent for his profound sympathy with the people of India, and for the extraordinary knowledge of the country he acquired. The

eloquence of his utterances has made them household words among us, and ensures their influence for all time. The noblest and most eloquent of modern statesmen also, Mr. Gladstone in his written essays, and Mr. Bright in his repeated orations, have stirred the heart of Englishmen, and deservedly earned the gratitude of the people of India by recalling England to a sense of her duties to her great dependency.

The essential importance of English opinion in regard to India will be best appreciated if we measure what the effect of such opinion has been in regard to Irish reform. Internal agitation in Ireland has always been useless ; it was only when Irish agitation was supplemented by a powerful phalanx of opinion in England that any concessions were allowed to the sister island. And so it is in the case of India. There is too much reason to justify the fears of those who look on the peaceful solution of the Indian problem as a mere speculative contingency altogether outside the sphere of practical politics. We know that internal pressure is powerless ; it leads to repression only, the ultimate outcome of which must be a national outbreak. The one chance of a peaceful solution rests with the English people, who alone have it in their hands to effect a material modification of the Anglo-Indian attitude by means

of the external pressure of public opinion from the mother country.

The powerlessness of any action which may originate in India itself is illustrated by the history of the late administration. It is impossible that I can mention Lord Ripon's name in terms of too high praise. From the moment he landed in India to the day he left it he laboured for the native population. His tenure of office will always be a memorable one. He will be known in history as the author of a progressive and enlightened policy, from which no subsequent Government will be able to swerve, as a statesman of wide and sincere sympathy with the people of the country, as a Governor-General above all others 'the Friend of India'; and it will be the proudest honour of his successors if their names are handed down to posterity with that of Ripon. Yet he was able to accomplish little. It is true that the political revolution now taking place in India is largely attributable to his exertions—although by the irony of fate it is far more largely attributable to the blind fanaticism of those who opposed him—but the actual results of his administration as shown upon the statute-book are not very great. I recognise the difficulties by which he was surrounded, and it may be that he was encompassed by other difficulties of which I

have no knowledge. He was harassed and hampered in an inconceivable degree by the bigotry and race feeling of his own fellow-countrymen. He was paralysed from want of support, and neither he nor any man in his position single-handed could have overcome the dead wall of opposition by which he was confronted.

We may be thankful to think that his services to India are not yet ceased, and that he will yet be able to do more good for India in his own native land than he was able to do in India itself. Public opinion in England will rally round him in acknowledgment of the services he has rendered, and from his influence in the guidance and control of that opinion we may hope for much. The complete confidence which the natives of India repose in him, the almost idolatrous admiration they entertain for him, the very magic of his name in every English-speaking Indian household from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, establish an absolute duty on the British public to recognise and accept his leadership.

I take this opportunity (before I allude further to Lord Ripon's policy) of linking the present with the past, and of invoking for his predecessors also their due tribute of acknowledgment. I do this advisedly, for I am able to

bear testimony to the good which has been done; and I think there is too great a tendency among those who are deeply impressed with the injustice of the English conquest to look with jaundiced eyes on all features of Indian administration. We may condemn the conquest (as animated by unworthy motives for which no adequate justification has ever been brought forward), but we need not blind ourselves to the advantages which have followed from it. If it has been the case that, almost without exception, every Governor-General has extended the area of British territory, it is also the case that every Governor-General has taken his part in consolidating a peaceful administration over the territory so acquired. If the external policy of Government has been one of systematic aggression, it is also true that the internal policy has been one of continual progress. To Lord Cornwallis we owe the foundation of the present form of the civil administration, and the purification of the Civil Service. To Lord William Bentinck we owe the establishment of the principle that no natives of India are to be excluded by reason of their birth from any appointments under Government.<sup>1</sup> To Lord Dalhousie we owe the initia-

<sup>1</sup> As long ago as 1833 it was provided by Act of Parliament 'that no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born



tion of a policy for developing the resources of the country which is now bearing fruit. To Sir John Lawrence we owe the municipalisation of the large towns ;<sup>1</sup> to Lord Mayo the decentralisation of the finances. There is not one of the Governor-Generals of India whose name we

subject of her Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the said Company.' The same assurance was conveyed by the Queen's proclamation of 1858, when the Government of India was transferred from the Company to the Crown. And so it was observed by Lord Northbrook in the House of Lords, 'Whether it was Lord Dalhousie with his imperial instincts, or Lord Canning with the responsibility laid upon him of dealing with the mutiny, or Lord Lawrence with his great knowledge of the internal organisation of the country, or Lord Mayo, associated from childhood with the Conservative party,—all alike held that there should be no distinction of class or race, and that there should be one law for all classes of her Majesty's subjects.'

<sup>1</sup> The following utterance of Sir John Lawrence, on August 31, 1864, distinctly foreshadows our present policy : 'Great public benefit is to be expected from the firm establishment of a system of municipal administration in India. Neither the central Government nor the local Governments are capable of providing either the funds or the executive agency for making the improvements of various kinds in all the cities and towns of India which are demanded by the rapidly developing wealth of the country. The people of India are quite capable of administering their own affairs ; the municipal feeling is deeply rooted in them. The village communities, each of which is a little republic, are the most abiding of Indian institutions. Holding the position we do in India, every view of duty and policy should induce us to leave as much as possible of the business of the country to be done by the people.'

may not associate with large and enlightened measures for the welfare, education, and political training of the people.

I venture, therefore, to think that the progress already made is a fit subject for commemoration. It is well to remember that a policy of consolidation has proceeded hand in hand with a career of conquest, that the establishment of order is always essential to any real progress, and that the united and continuous efforts of previous generations are the necessary introduction to all great measures of reform. If the war epoch has at last drawn to a close, if the conquest of India is complete, and our future proconsuls may sigh with Alexander that they have no more worlds to conquer, if all the energies of the Indian Government may now be devoted to the encouragement of national reconstruction—the vantage position we thus occupy is entirely due to the labours of our predecessors. It is they who have prepared the way for the pending changes which are about to affect every portion of the Empire. It is well to acknowledge that great progress has been already made in imparting civilisation, order, and prosperity, and that, perhaps, the greatest material revolution ever known in the world has been set going by the influence of Government.

The policy of Lord Ripon was thus described

by an acute but hostile critic in the House of Lords: 'It is the policy of gradually transferring political power in India from European to native hands.' 'Does it not mean,' asked Lord Lytton,<sup>1</sup> 'nay, ought it not to be taken as meaning, we, the English Government in India, feel ourselves in a false position, from which we wish to extricate ourselves as quickly as possible? We must no doubt hold office for a certain time, in order to train up you natives to take our places; but this is our only object. As soon as it is accomplished (and the sooner the better), we shall retire and leave India to be governed by whatever body her native representative assemblies may see fit to entrust with the task of government.' This is Lord Lytton's language, not mine; it is a paraphrase uttered by a politician who had himself been Viceroy, with a full sense of responsibility and knowledge that his words were not likely to be forgotten. They are, indeed, but the echo of a sentiment which has made itself widely felt among the Anglo-Indian community in India. The organisation in Calcutta of a European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association, which comprises among its members nearly all the unofficial Europeans in Bengal, which is largely supported by the active sympathy of officials, towards which more

<sup>1</sup> As reported in the *Times*, April 10, 1883.

than a lakh of rupees has been subscribed, and which, according to the 'Englishman' newspaper, 'inaugurates a new era in the history of British India,' is a phenomenon only to be understood in the light of Lord Lytton's gloss on Lord Ripon's policy. It is true that Lord Ripon himself was careful to abstain from any such outspoken avowal, and that his friends and supporters were but too ready to offer the excuse that the proposals which excited so much bitter and violent opposition were really isolated in character and individually of small importance. It is true also that the language of Lord Lytton was at once deprecated by her Majesty's Ministers in that half-hearted manner in which the Liberal Government is too apt to protest against conclusions which must ensue from the conscientious application of its professed principles. It would, therefore, be incorrect to say that either the Liberal Ministry at home or Lord Ripon in India had consciously identified themselves with the policy which Lord Lytton enunciated on their behalf. On the contrary, it is probable that Lord Ripon was, in the first instance, as unconscious of the inevitable tendency of his own measures as he was admittedly unprepared for the tremendous opposition their introduction provoked. At the same time it would be unjust to deny to Lord

Ripon the most ample credit for what he has done. He was the instrument at whose hands a long and elaborate preparation has at last received its due fulfilment. But he was a great deal more than a mere instrument. The policy which he espoused is indeed the logical development of principles which all previous Viceroys—even Lord Lytton himself—have been ripening to maturity. But it was Lord Ripon who took action far more decided than any of his predecessors, who by his own personal enthusiasm infused life into the dry bones of the dull office machine, and by the vigour of his example stimulated the subordinate Governments to give practical expression to the views he so strongly holds. In accordance with these views, the last barriers of civil inequality are now being removed, and the local officials are busying themselves in organising a scheme of local self-government. The benevolent despotism of an autocratic administration is merging into a system of free representation and municipal and local independence. The way is being gradually made straight for the emancipation of the Indian people. There has been no change in the power of Government, which is still supreme as that of the Czar of Russia. The Government of India is still characterised by its absolutely despotic constitution. But it is in the spirit and disposi-

tion with which supreme power is now exercised that a change is visible. The era of territorial aggrandisement has exhausted itself ; the cry of annexation is heard no longer. In Afghanistan we have lately seen the complete reversal of an erroneous policy, an unreserved withdrawal from an unjust aggression. The province of Mysore, after having been for nearly fifty years under British rule, has been recently restored to its hereditary prince, and, for the first time in the history of India, 'the red line of British possessions has receded.' There are prospects of a still more urgently needed surrender of territory—the restitution of the Berars. The Guicowar of Baroda has been restored to his dominions. A native judge has been appointed to officiate as Chief Justice of the High Court.

National pride, imperial instincts, patriotic self-aggrandisement—these are principles no longer avowed as the basis of our Indian policy. The 'enforcement of civilisation, irrespectively of the wishes or feelings of the people,' under which legislation and taxes have been augmented until the imposition of a new fiscal duty becomes a question rather of policy than of finance ; 'commerce, united with and made to flourish by war,' a doctrine so disastrous to English workmen, who have long been learning to lean more and more on the hazardous mar-

kets of India and China ; the ' establishment of a scientific frontier,' absorbing for military purposes all the proceeds of additional taxation which had been expressly levied as an insurance against future famine ; the ' inherent overwhelming turpitude of native character,' that ' Anglo-Indian dogma so freely and unwarrantably postulated by subordinate officials and *littérateurs*—all these are phrases which, I venture to hope, are discredited and past. We may observe among exceptional members of the official community manifestations of a wise and liberal policy, and of a wider grasp of the meaning of political events. The admirable independence and courage which were lately displayed by Mr. Harrison, the Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation, command our respect, and inspire us with a confidence that others situated in his position may be emboldened to act as he has done. A recent essay, published in the columns of the ' Pioneer' newspaper, which it is no secret is from the pen of Sir Auckland Colvin, the Finance Minister in India, assures us that among the highest authorities of Government there are those who are alive to changes unrecognised by most of those habituated to residence in the country. And no one; it is needless to add, was more keenly alive to the facts of the case than Lord Ripon himself.

The old principles of administration, although they are thus discredited, cannot, however, be formally destroyed until they are replaced ; and for the Government to accomplish this is no easy task. It requires the assurance of strong moral support from home, support not from the English Cabinet only but from the English nation also. And so I say that it is the especial privilege of public opinion in England to assist the Government, to strengthen its determination, and, where it may be necessary, to formulate its policy. I do not deny that English opinion may profitably be exercised on particular subjects, but I am persuaded that it is of greater importance that it should be directed to moulding the first general principles of Government. It is not by attempting to rule directly a country like India that the people of England can do their duty to that country. The details of administration must be left in the hands of those who possess a competent knowledge of Indian affairs, upon whom must always rest the personal responsibility of giving effect to a re-constructive policy without disturbance. For them there is good and noble work to be done during the remaining period of our rule in India. The difficulties accompanying the present epoch of excitement can only be successfully overcome by the cordial co-operation of Indian



officials during the crisis. By the exercise of personal influence, which in virtue of their position is almost indescribably great, by the force of a strong example of tolerance, courtesy, and good-will, they have it in their power to do much to temper prestige and pride, and to establish a more kindly relationship with the people. For the people of England, their duties lie in a different direction. Busied with the ordinary affairs of life, it is not possible for them to familiarise themselves with the details of Indian administration. Their interests are nearer home. Their immediate duty in regard to India is rather to form their own convictions on the general principles which should guide the Government in its policy, and to labour in the creation of a popular opinion which shall share those convictions, and stimulate and strengthen the local authorities in putting them into operation.

Those, at least, who think as I do need not hesitate to offer such aid as they can give. We have no cause for hesitation. We are already armed for the encounter, and, inspired by the belief we profess, have no difficulty in formulating the principles which we think should be followed. We accept the fundamental doctrine of modern social life, the subordination of politics to morals. We claim to test our political action

by moral considerations, allowing that for the State as well as for individuals it is the question not of rights but of duties that must take precedence. These are the new principles we have to offer in substitution of the worn-out ideas which have provisionally been employed. This, therefore, is our policy of reconstruction. The policy of the future—which is based alike on the duty of England and on the need of India, on the devotion which is due from a strong nation to a weak and oppressed people—must be a policy of national self-sacrifice, voluntary restitution, and disinterested moderation.

*POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION.*

THERE are, I suppose, not many reflecting persons who will maintain that our occupation of India as we now hold it can be of a permanent character. The emancipation of India has become inevitable ever since a system of English education was established, and the principle of political equality accepted.<sup>1</sup> It is now merely a matter of time.

<sup>1</sup> I am glad to cite the authority of so eminent an Indian administrator as the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone in general support of the view now expressed. He wrote, in a published letter, so long ago as 1850 : ' I conceive that the administration of all the departments of a great country by a small number of foreign visitors, in a state of isolation produced by a difference in religion, ideas, and manners, which cuts them off from all intimate communion with the people, can never be contemplated as a permanent state of things. I conceive also that the progress of education among the natives renders such a scheme impracticable, even if it were otherwise free from objection. It might, perhaps, have once been possible to have retained the natives in a subordinate condition (at the expense of national justice and honour) by studiously repressing their spirit and discouraging their progress in knowledge ; but we are now doing our best to raise them in all mental qualities to a level with ourselves, and to instil into them the liberal opinions in govern-

Fortunately in this case our self-interest, if rightly judged, coincides with our duty. The advantages derived by England from its occupation of India are far less considerable than is commonly supposed. An Indian career is popularly regarded as a 'good opening, an immediate provision, an honourable profession, in which a man's early manhood may be spent, and from which he may hope to retire with a competence soon after the attainment of his maturity, or, at any rate, when there is yet left the prospect of many years of that maturity and subsequent old age to be passed in his native country.' There is, however, a dark side to this attractive picture. Draw back the curtain, and beneath the glamour of the East behold a young English lad full of health and hope and heart, who has complacently sold his birthright for voluntary exile. His youth, his manhood, his (premature) age are bartered for a moderate income of money, a career which involves existence in a detestable and enervating climate, a life which brings with it the laceration of every domestic feeling, and the enforced separation from every home influence intended to soothe, to soften, and ameliorate man's nature. He is

ment and policy which have long prevailed in this country, and it is vain to endeavour to rule them on principles only suited to a slavish and ignorant population.'

separated from wife, children, and friends. His children cannot be reared in India. At an early age they and their mother must separate from him, and the family bond is broken, sometimes for ever. Or the rupture may assume that worse and more immoral form, in which children are produced without stint, and all the duty of their management and education is thrown off by both parents. This is the more reprehensible and, unfortunately, the more frequent course. But even in the more honourable alternative, when the mother, in this conflict of duties, is torn from her husband and devotes herself to the children, it is hardly possible that family life and domestic affection should not suffer from the prolonged and unnatural separation. It is this family dissolution, these domestic anxieties, that are the most frightful accompaniment of our Indian life. A man may gain money by going to India, but he may lose that which no money can buy. At the close of his career he can, indeed, retire to his own country; but if he still retains his energy he can find no outlet for its exercise, and his mature experience is wasted in an idle and objectless existence. In the majority of cases he is too broken to take to home pursuits; his constitution has lost its vigour; for many years he has been 'grinding out his strong

heart at the miserable wheel'; his thoughts have been narrowed to his special occupation, and when that is given up the air he breathed is withdrawn, and he has practically ceased to live.

There are many Anglo-Indians to whom the above description will not seem over-coloured.

It is true that so long as we hold India we are in possession of a safety-valve for the pressure of our population, where the surplus youth of our middle class may emigrate and earn a livelihood. But even from the most favourable aspect of their case it must be said that such men emigrate, 'not to form a new state, a settled society with its hopes and advantages, and the improving character which the purpose would naturally carry with it, but to draw what gain they can from the particular scene they have chosen, and to return with their profit to their original home.' There is no permanence in their migration. The perpetual coming and going, the perpetual troubling of the society originally left—not to speak of the demoralisation among the settlers themselves—is an evil influence that far outweighs the material advantage derived by England from the fortune-hunting propensities of her adventurous offspring. Pilgrims and sojourners in the land of their adoption, they are aliens and strangers in the country of their birth.

If it may be urged that our mercantile transactions with India (which are large and valuable) are likely to cease with our resignation of sovereignty, it is sufficient to point to the United States of America, where the declaration of independence was certainly not accompanied by any diminution of trade with the mother country.

If it is argued that England without India will decay into a second-rate Power among European nations, and that the possession of India is necessary as a training-ground for our soldiers, it may be replied that England was a great Power before India was ever conquered ; that the country of Cromwell has always been strong by virtue of the energies and manhood of its people ; and that although England is still strong, it is rather in spite of than in consequence of India, which is a burdensome outwork whence we should retire for concentration.

Undeniable, on the other hand, are the evils which the possession of India entails on England. The preservation of India is the basis of our disturbing action as a Government, the object kept in view in all our national policy as regards extra-European complications. India is the permanent element of disturbance in all our relations with the great nations of the extreme East. It is a question of Indian revenue

that vitiates our intercourse with China. At the same time the current of our foreign policy in Europe is hardly less injuriously affected by Indian considerations.<sup>1</sup> Our political leaders do not hesitate to say that we are an Asiatic rather than a Western Power, and urge us, while abandoning that union with our European compeers which has been the great outcome of centuries of labour and spontaneous effort, to throw ourselves into contact with nations materially weaker than ourselves, and separated from us by vast continents and seas, and every difference of climate, language, religion, manners, customs,

<sup>1</sup> The following extract from a leading article in the *Times* of May 12, 1879, is a remarkable illustration of the attitude of public opinion in this and other respects relating to India :— ‘It is obvious to remark how very largely the whole foreign policy of England is affected by the fact that we hold India. Everything done east of Malta [query, Gibraltar also] has some reference to this. If we are concerned for Asia Minor or for Egypt, it is because these countries lie on or near the highway to India. If the progress of Russia has been watched with jealousy, it is because each fresh step she has been taking has brought her directly or indirectly towards the sphere within which Indian interests are supreme. It is right that from time to time we should ask ourselves the reason and the justification of our Indian policy in the very wide sense we have given it. The advantage of our Indian Empire ought to be beyond doubt if we are to be at such vast and incessant pains in maintaining it. . . . There seems now to have arrived a time at which something like a new departure may be taken in the management of Indian affairs. Many concurrent influences point to the need for this and to the possibility of it.’



and historical associations. While such a policy prevails our home interests must suffer. We have created innumerable fictitious interests abroad, as though our real domestic interests were not sufficient. The Houses of Parliament are clogged with a constant accumulation of arrears of domestic political engagements. A great change in the agrarian conditions of the country has shown itself to be impending ; the relations of labour and capital are in a state of transition ; the last relics of Catholic and feudal institutions are passing away ; and while the struggle for existence is fitfully prolonged, no serious attempt is made to replace the old organisation. The sufferings of thousands of our fellow-countrymen in our great and growing cities appeal to England in silent condemnation of the imperial instincts, the dominant passion of Englishmen for extended empire.

Briefly, then, the career of territorial acquisition on which we have entered cannot be pursued without the displacement of primary duties upon which the happiness and welfare of our own country depends. Our interest falls in with our duty. We can no longer afford to delay the issue. We cannot venture to cling to India in the blind determination to hold what we have once got till we can hold it no longer. Our duty and interest alike demand that we

should <sup>1</sup> 'withdraw from our occupation without any unnecessary delay within the shortest period compatible with due arrangements for the security of European life and property, and with such measures as may be deemed advisable in behalf of Indian independence and good government.'

I identify myself with no rash policy. I would have nothing done hastily or without due consideration. As an humble and loyal servant of Government, and duly conscious of the responsibilities of my official position, I am especially careful to guard against any misunderstanding of the attitude I assume. India is a tutelage unexampled in history, and we have incurred liabilities on its account not lightly to be set aside. An abrupt retreat would, I imagine, not be advocated by any. England should no more break from its past than should India break from the traditions of its history. To evacuate India immediately and without due precautions would, as has been well said, be to act like a man who should kidnap a child, and then in a fit of repentance abandon him in a tiger jungle. The deplorable opposition which has been kindled in India against Lord Ripon's measures is evidence of the difficult and

<sup>1</sup> The language which I use here and occasionally in other places is suggested by Dr. Congreve's pamphlet.

delicate character of the work which lies before us. I do not say that the process of reconstruction can be effected otherwise than by slow and gradual means. Years must elapse, generations may pass away, before we can expect the consummation of the policy I advocate. But it is a policy which we should always keep before our eyes, to which all our efforts should converge. Sooner or later India must again take her old rank among the nations of the East, and all our action should be devoted to facilitating her progress to freedom. Not in mere vague talk, but strenuously and of set purpose it should be the principal object of our Indian Government to address itself to the peaceful liquidation of its concerns, and the reconstruction of native administrations in its own place.

The task is not so stupendous as at first appears. The difficulty is not so much to organise internal administration as to provide for the existence of healthy relations between separate and independent states. But even in this respect the difficulties are exaggerated. It would ill become Englishmen who are actually engaged in a daily policy of dangerous repression to confess themselves incapable of political reconstruction.

It is not possible for me in writing on this subject to do more than deal with the most

general principles ; but speaking very generally I will content myself with saying that the best provisional solution of the problem is apparently to be found in the proposal to place India on a fraternal footing with the colonies of England. A constitutional relationship of this kind, as though England were the parent country and India its colony, would form a material guarantee for the peaceful attitude of the native states. England will always have a stake in India sufficient to call forth interference if necessary, and in the event of a civil war in India the military interposition of England would be required in the interest of both countries. England herself, therefore, will continue to afford the principal guarantee of peace.

Until the armies of Europe are disbanded it appears useless to speculate about the disbandment of the English army in India. But with a proper reorganisation of the native army it will be possible to effect a material reduction in the number of English troops required. There are only two ways of governing a conquered country ; there is no safe standing point between absolute suppression and absolute equality. The last is the goal to which we tend, and in military no less than civil reconstruction it is necessary to identify the interest of individuals with the State. The native army is, however,

now organised entirely on a mercenary basis. It is more and more replenished by rude and ignorant recruits from the borders of our frontier or beyond it, and the martial spirit of our own Indian subjects is gradually dying out. 'Tribes,' writes Sir Richard Temple in a recent 'Contemporary Review,' 'which fifty years ago were notoriously attached to arms are now comparatively unwarlike. With training and discipline the troops will still behave very well ; but with the masses of them there is hardly now the predilection for the fight, the instinct of physical contention, that there used to be.' The Mogul Emperors adopted heartily and completely the policy of trust ; Akbar's greatest generals and most devoted adherents were children of the very men his grandfather had conquered ; the Rajput chivalry was the main bulwark of the Mogul throne. The British Government, on the contrary, has adopted a policy of suspicion ; the officers of our native army are only superannuated old privates, who in virtue of their longer services draw larger pay, and are permitted to sit down in the presence of an English subaltern. We can expect no assistance from such men, and we get none. The Russians can get from the territories they have absorbed in Central Asia an Alikhanoff or a Loris Melikoff. We can only produce men who rise to the rank of

Naik, Havildar, or Resaldar, or to some other subordinate post, the name of which perplexes the English public. The first step towards the reorganisation of the native army is to increase the pay and power of the native officers, to afford some scope to their abilities and ambition, and to raise them to a level with ourselves. The object is to attract into our armies the gentlemen and aristocracy of the country. This in itself would afford a powerful impetus towards the conversion of the native mercenary army into a national force. The decentralisation (if it may so be called) of the native army is the necessary complement of this policy. The tendency to decentralise has already been recognised in civil administration, and is undoubtedly destined to break up the Empire into a federation of states such as prevails in the Canadian Dominion and the United States. Provincial taxation will lead to provincial representative government, and gradually to the development and definition of the peculiar idiosyncrasy of each federated state. The establishment of provincial army corps, with an *esprit* and traditions of their own, recruited from the common people, and officered by the native gentry of the provinces in which they are to serve, would prove both a safeguard against internal disorder and a protection against attack from without.

Just as the Rajputs and Mussulmans under the Moguls formed separate armies with their national chiefs, and inspired by rivalry distinguished themselves by feats of valour which are still remembered ; so the provincial armies of the future, animated by a similar emulation, would display equal valour and hardihood in fighting for a common cause. The native remedy—the permission to volunteer—is another proposal which tends in the same direction of the gradual disbandment of mercenaries and of English soldiers. The agitation in favour of volunteering has been set on foot and is sustained entirely by educated natives of the country. It is primarily the outcome of an honourable feeling that as they ask for a larger share in the administration, and to be allowed to exercise the privileges and rights of citizens, so they ought not to shrink from their national duties. But this feeling is also allied with others equally honourable. As the author of the pamphlet I have already quoted well says,<sup>1</sup>—

The desire to be enrolled as volunteers arises (1) from a wish for political equality, a desire not to be regarded as helots, while other sections of the community are regarded as Spartans ; (2) from a conviction that those who claim their share as citizens in the prizes of administration must show their willing-

<sup>1</sup> *Ought Natives to be welcomed as Volunteers?* p. 22.

ness to bear their share of the burdens of the citizenship ; (3) from a knowledge that the Bengalees and other Indian races are physically degenerate, and a desire to do something, however little, to make them less effeminate ; (4) from a pride in association with a noble empire like that over which her Majesty presides, and a desire to share in its glories by being numbered among its defenders ; (5) from a conviction that a struggle may be imminent in India between the forces of retrogression led by Russia and those of progress led by England, and that their sympathies and their fortunes must unhesitatingly and unwaveringly be thrown in with the latter.

The enthusiasm which the educated natives have evinced on this subject is very remarkable, and it has been echoed by the native press with singular earnestness and unanimity. If persistence will bear any proportion to the determination expressed, it is a movement calculated to exercise a considerable influence in modifying the future constitution of our armies, and in keeping alive the military spirit of the country.

The ideal of political reconstruction is, therefore, a federation of states under the colonial supremacy of England, with provincial national armies gradually replacing the present standing army of Great Britain. The careful conservation of existing social institutions is the essential supplement of this reconstruction. The country is utterly unprepared for such a social revolu-



tion as our Western civilisation would thrust upon it. It still needs the hierarchical leadership of caste. The present tendency of the Government to reduce the power of the dominant classes, and to destroy all distinctions between the different strata of society, is calculated to exercise a deplorable effect on all sides. What is required, in the absence of an emasculating foreign army, is an organisation of small states, each with a prince at its head, and a small body of patrician aristocracy interposing between him and the lower orders of working-men. For such an arrangement the country appears to be eminently adapted ; the United States of India should be bound together by means of some political organisation other than the colonial supremacy of England. The lower orders stand in urgent need of an aristocracy above them ; their ignorance and characteristic docility and want of firmness require the guidance and protection of more powerful superiors. The basis of internal order is, therefore, to be found in the recognition of a patrician aristocracy of indigenous growth, and trained by past associations to control and lead. Even the Mahomedan community is largely influenced by caste practices derived from its long contact with the Hindoo system. The Mahomedans as well as the Hindoos are thus well fitted for an aristo-

cratic form of government. The difference between the Hindoo and Mahomedan religions would not at all stand in the way of the establishment of a similar form of government in both cases. The difference in religion is, however, one of the greatest practical difficulties in any scheme of reconstruction. I do not forget that the principal officers of state under the great Akbar were Hindoos ; that the chief officers under Hyder Ali were also Hindoos ; and that the ablest prime minister of Runjeet Singh, the man who kept his policy straight, was a Mahomedan. These instances give ground for hope that a principle of social unity between the chiefs and aristocracies of the Hindoo and Mahomedan classes may some day be established. At the same time it is impossible to be blind to the general character of the relations between Hindoos and Mahomedans ; to the jealousy which exists and manifests itself so frequently, even under British rule, in local outbursts of popular fanaticism ; to the inherent antipathy with which every devout follower of Islam cannot but regard the idolatrous worshippers of Kali and Krishna. There are good reasons, therefore, for saying, as has been said, that the leaders of either community would find it insupportable to live under the domination of the other. Certainly I, for one, do not think

that any amalgamation is probable, or that it would be possible to find from either community a common head with equal sympathies for both. The leaders of the people have, indeed, to a considerable extent already agreed to a separation, and in many parts of India the Mahomedan aristocracies are so distributed geographically that they will be able to avoid a collision with their Hindoo rivals. It appears desirable that the British Government should extend a helping hand to assist this natural tendency. The lower orders, fortunately, will remain unaffected by such a separation, and to the bulk of the people the difficulties of assimilation do not apply. The Delta of Bengal, for instance, is peopled for the most part by quiet and inoffensive races, whether Mussulman or Hindoo, between whom, from long association, a close affinity exists. The followers of Islam, who constitute an undoubted majority of the population, differ little in language, customs, or occupation from the older inhabitants of the country. In this division of the country the difficulty does not present itself; but in other parts of India it will generally be found that the Mahomedans are still, as they were under their own dynasty, the principal members of the community, and that they have established among themselves a religious and fanatical exclusiveness from the

infidels with whom it is their lot to live. With these men and with the leaders of the Hindoo community, who are divided from one another by unsympathising, not to say hostile, relations, the difficulties of assimilation are insuperable, and it is only in the distant future that we can venture to predict a time when the fundamental differences between them shall subside under the impulse of a common faith and purpose.

The future of the European settlers and of the Eurasian community demands a similar but somewhat easier solution. The tendency of Eurasians to imitate the attitude of Europeans in regard to the natives is a source of growing disturbance, inasmuch as their claims to social supremacy cannot be admitted by the more strictly called native community. These claims arise only from blood and language relations with British-born subjects, who, however, on their part hold the Eurasians at a distance in consequence of their relationship with the natives. Excluded on both sides, their condition is extremely anomalous, and if England were to abandon India it is probable that as a class they would sink to the level of the Mahomedan proletariat. But if England does not break off from India, as we must all hope she will not, it seems that the welfare of the Eurasians as well as of Europeans could be best

secured by the formation of separate little settlements at suitable localities, resembling the free cities of Germany or the city republics of Venice and Genoa. Such cities would then contain the European and Eurasian community who may choose to reside in the country. This is a state of things which is now, in fact, actually growing up. All the important civil and military stations in India comprise what is called a European quarter, and the municipal administration of such places is a source of endless misunderstanding between the native and Anglo-Indian populations. Complete separation, both by geographical limits and political institutions, is apparently the only means of putting an end to irritation which in times of political trouble may easily become a source of serious danger. Their protection, if protection were necessary, will be afforded by the prestige and power of England. But it is not necessary. It has been acutely suggested by one of my native friends—a friend to whom I am indebted for other suggestions on this subject—that the alarm so often raised by Anglo-Indians on the ground of hostility from the natives means nothing more than a consciousness of their own hostile inclinations towards the natives. The natives may be irrational and uncompromisingly exclusive, but

they are not aggressive. And the alarms of the Anglo-Indians, seemingly so innocent and so entirely on the defensive, are designed only to rouse the sympathies of Englishmen at home, so that they may send forth succour which the Anglo-Indians know very well will serve them also for purposes of aggression. Even if all military support from England were withdrawn, the withdrawal would not be injurious to Anglo-Indians, who, when conveniently located in separate places and with separate political constitutions, would be constrained in their own self interest to adopt a more conciliatory demeanour towards the people of the country.

Turning now to the question of foreign invasion, on which I must say a few words, I think most persons will be found to agree that there need be no apprehension of such invasion from Asiatic Powers; if there be, it may be presumed that the various states and free cities would be strong enough to resist any attack. But it will be alleged that the real fear of foreign invasion is from European Powers, and probably from Russia. There are persons to whom Russia is a constant dread, a kind of demon of infinite capacity, possessed by a malignant and unceasing desire to wrest India from our hands. It is a curious phenomenon, this prejudice against Russia; but it is a preju-

dice, in my opinion, as baseless as it is hard to explain. The Russophobic labours under a strange hallucination. I, for my part, believe with Mr. Bright 'that Russia has no more idea of crossing the frontier of India into the Indian Empire than we have of crossing the frontier of India and invading the Asiatic possessions of Russia.' With Lord Salisbury I would advise the victims of a baseless scare to buy large-sized maps, and learn how insuperable are the obstacles which Nature has placed between the land of the Czar and the dominions of the Empress. With Lord Beaconsfield 'I think that from the period of the conquest of Tashkend, some ten years ago [this was said in 1876], every one must have felt that it was almost inevitable that all of these Khanates would be conquered by Russia. Some gentlemen think that this advance of Russia ought to be nipped in the bud. But nipping it in the bud means that the English Power should have proceeded beyond our Indian boundary, and should have entered on a most hazardous and, I should say, most unwise struggle. I am not of that sort which views the advance of Russia in Asia with deep misgivings.' These remarks of Lord Beaconsfield indicate with prescient sagacity that the simplest, safest, and cheapest way of solving the so-called Central Asian difficulty is by

trusting to the natural defences of India as the best protection of that country. The war parties in England and Russia alike are equally a curse to the progress and prosperity of mankind. Aggression on the part of Russia into India would be as suicidal in her case as the aggression, now so warmly advocated, on the part of England towards Herat would infallibly result in the destruction of any army despatched thither. War, of course, may result from the folly and wickedness of the rulers of either country, but the invasion of India by Russia appears to me one of the most improbable of contingencies. In any case our surest safeguard is the existence of a united and contented nation to whom the largest concession of political rights has been accorded and the amplest justice rendered. Russia would be as powerless against an united India as France has shown herself to be against China. Professor Seeley has shown that in the proper sense of the word India was never conquered by England. The people of India never united to oppose the English. Whenever one Indian state has been overthrown, it has almost invariably been with the help of some other Indian state. There was no Indian nation, and there has therefore been no real English conquest of India. No foreign Power could conquer India if she were a



true nation. The English rule itself will not survive the fulfilment of those national tendencies which we have ourselves brought into existence. The future of India will be a federation of independent states cemented together by the power of England. India so constituted will afford from its own resources the most powerful check against aggression for all time. The close connection of England with India, the attitude of the foster-mother country under the proposed colonial relations, and of the free cities, which must always be English in tone and spirit, will not only tend to prevent a short-sighted jealousy, but will materially strengthen the United States of India in presenting an unbroken front of opposition to a common foe.

In any case it may be argued that it would not be difficult for England on the withdrawal of her own standing army to secure treaty rights for India from the European Powers. Such rights would be the easier to negotiate for if it were seen that England were honestly giving up its policy of self-aggrandisement. The evidence of honesty of purpose so recognised would inexpressibly benefit the cause of peace and future progress.

*THE SOCIAL AND MORAL CRISIS.*

IT has been justly said that the India of the present is no more like the India of Lord Ellenborough than the England of to-day is like the England of Queen Anne. This remark is equally true in respect of moral, social, and intellectual advancement as in regard to material affairs. But, morally and socially at least, the change is far greater than this analogy would imply. In England there has been evolution, not revolution. The change has been the result of natural spontaneous progress brought about by the action of internal forces. In India the change has been artificial and forced from without. It is the product of the relationship between two civilisations at an unequal stage of development in immediate contact with one another. The question in India, therefore, is not one of progress only; the movement, so far as it has gone, is revolution pure and simple: in other words, it is the introduction of the complex machinery of Western civilisation into the simple society of the East.

The moving spirit of this revolution is English education. Under its solvent influence the old organisations are crumbling up, and the Indian nations have entered upon a long career of transition preparatory to the establishment of a new order. The immediate inevitable result of this is disturbance. Our admiration for Western civilisation would be blind indeed if we were not able to see that grave evils are likely to attend upon its transplantation to Indian soil. The actual Hindooism of the present has behind it a polytheistic past of thirty centuries or more, which must inevitably mould and colour its future, whatever the form it may hereafter take. The effect of English education is to break this continuity. The habits and opinions of the people are modified, and even their mode of life is changed, but the hereditary tendencies by which the progress of the race must ultimately be determined are left untouched. There is no power of guidance or consolidation. It is possible for Government to exercise an ennobling influence upon a people with whom it is completely homogeneous. But where this homogeneity does not exist, the influence of the governors is of a very different character. It is not possible to effect permanent good by educational establishments which are in the hands of an alien Power, and therefore of

men who cannot fully sympathise with the wants of the people. It is not possible to successfully disseminate Western ideas through an official channel. The Roman prefects of old were all unequal to the task of Christianising the Empire ; far less is the de-polytheising of India a task reserved for Indian officials to undertake. Such a change can only be effected by voluntary efforts, partly foreign and partly indigenous, the doctrine coming in its main features from the West, but being moulded into appropriate forms by Eastern intellects.

It is certain that the regenerating doctrine must arise in the West. The vanguard of Humanity is in the West ; and, the development of the race everywhere being due to the same fundamental laws, must correspond in its main features with the earlier development of its most advanced portion. But if we look at the West as it actually is, we find a state of utter confusion in every department of human energy. Nations, Churches, and classes are at war with one another, and disunited among themselves. It is a serious symptom of insufficiency that there should be found among us those who hope to establish a national organisation upon the fragments of Christendom. It is even more deplorable that any should advocate the wholesale importation into India of European civilisa-

tion in its most material and anarchical form, without any moral safeguards. The present anarchy which prevails in Europe characterises the transitional epoch between the repressive policy of the old Catholic *régime* and that healthier policy of the future which is destined to rest upon the basis of a stable and progressive public opinion. But what does such anarchy become when transplanted to the East? There it is the natural product of no such period of transition; it is a disintegrating force intruding into an alien order of things; it is an agent of destruction, the disastrous effects of which will have to be carefully eliminated at some future period. The West must be itself united before it can expect to produce a salutary influence upon the less advanced populations. Any present movement is premature. Such as was the dominion of Rome in the East, such must be that of Great Britain in India; and with England as with Rome the simple keeping of the peace must be the main object. The principal end of our government should be to maintain the *status quo* until modifications can be introduced which shall enable the passage from the old to the new order to be accomplished with the least perceptible disturbance.

We may be thankful that the Government action affects at present only a small portion of

the community, and that the vast bulk of the people of India is still unmoved by any of the moral or civilising influences which contact with the missionaries or the efforts of the Department of Public Instruction might be expected to impart. Nothing but disaster could ensue from unsettling the beliefs and prejudices of the multitude at too early a stage of its development. It will be time enough when the *élite* of the Hindoo community is thoroughly initiated into the civilisation of the West to consider how changes can be best introduced among the masses of the people.

Still more cause for thankfulness is there in the fact that the preliminary period of the revolution, during which the educational machinery has been under the direct control of a foreign Government, is drawing to a close. Official interference was unavoidable in the first instance—in no other way could a beginning have been made—but the educational movement in India now stands in need of no such stimulus. The sense of utter dependence on Government for support has given way before the progressive, enlightened, and independent spirit to which English education itself has given birth. The cry for English education which rings through all the Presidencies is sufficient evidence that there exists in India, as well as in Europe, a

worthy instinct among the people, a popular craving for education demanding satisfaction, and not an obstinacy requiring that it should be thrust upon them. Educational institutions, unaided by Government or by missionary societies, independent in the strictest sense of the word, are now flourishing with hundreds of English-speaking scholars, and set an example in instruction, discipline, and moral training which the older schools and colleges may well envy. It is in matters of education more than any other that the people of the country have become ripe for local self-government. The fact that large and high-class educational institutions can be effectually managed by native agency alone no longer admits of doubt. Systematic education is already falling into the hands of private enterprise. The time has come for the Government to transfer its educational endowments to the custody of those who have been educated in them. The present system of University administration, which is most unsatisfactory in all respects, must be reconstituted on a representative basis. The problem of grafting Western ideas on to an Oriental stock is now ready for solution in the only way in which a successful solution is possible—by means of Orientals who, having been thoroughly imbued, under our present

system of education, with a knowledge of Western civilisation, have at the same time not lost sight of the traditions of their past.

It is no longer possible for the Government to exercise any beneficial interference in this direction. Its function is exhausted, and its chief end in view should be to maintain order while the remaining period of transition is in the hands of those who may be able to control the movement. The true attitude, for some time to come at least, should be one of conservation and the encouragement of a system of protection. Its wisest policy will be to refrain from any action which leads directly to collision with the old theocratic organisation. The old Hindoo polytheism is a present basis of moral order, and rests upon foundations so plastic, that it can be moulded into the most diverse forms, adapting itself equally to the intellect of the subtle metaphysician and to the emotions of the unlettered peasant. It combines in itself all the elements of intensity, regularity, and permanence. Its chief attribute is stability. The system of caste, far from being the source of all the troubles which can be traced in Hindoo society, has rendered the most important services in the past, and still continues to sustain order and solidarity. The admirable order of Hindooism is too valuable to be rashly sacrificed



before any Moloch of progress. Better is order without progress, if that were possible, than progress with disorder. Hindooism is still vigorous, and the strength of its metaphysical subtlety and wide range of influence are yet instinct with life. In the future its distinctive conceptions will be preserved and incorporated into a higher faith ; but at present we are utterly incapable of replacing it by a religion which shall at once reflect the national life, and be competent to form a nucleus round which the love and reverence of its votaries may cluster.

The task now before us is to preserve order as far as may be practicable, and not to excite unnecessary disturbance. This duty is paramount in its political aspect, but it is, if possible, even more incumbent on us in its social and moral relations. The existing social order, demands, therefore, our first attention, and to this end I can find nothing more essential than a careful study and correct appreciation of the Hindoo caste system. That system has its defects undoubtedly, but they are defects more than counterbalanced by the services it renders. Those reformers who are in the habit of describing caste as the root of all evils in Hindoo society overlook the impossibility of uprooting an institution which has taken such a firm hold on the popular mind. They forget that the attempt

to abolish caste, if successful, would be attended with the most dangerous consequences unless some powerful religious influence were brought to bear upon the people in its place. They forget also that caste is still stronger as a social than as a religious institution, and that many a man who has entirely lost his belief in his religion is zealous and tenacious of his position as a high-caste man, and scrupulously performs all customary rites and ceremonies. Caste is now the framework which knits together Hindoo society ; it is the link which maintains the existing religious system of Hindooism in its present order. The problem of the future is not to destroy caste, but to modify it, to preserve its distinctive conceptions, and to gradually place them upon a social instead of a supernatural basis.

The following appreciation of the caste system by Comte<sup>1</sup> may have some influence in redeeming a noble institution from the undeserved contempt with which it is too often regarded. In describing its properties he says :—

We owe to it the first permanent division between theory and practice by the institution of a speculative class, invested with grand prerogatives of dignity and

<sup>1</sup> *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*. Translated by Miss Martineau. Vol. ii, p. 238. Trubner and Co.

leisure ; and to this period we must refer the primitive elements of genuine knowledge, it being that in which the human mind began to regulate its general course. The same may be said of the fine arts, then carefully cultivated, not only for the sake of their charm, but as tributary to dogma and worship on the one hand, and information and religious propagation on the other. The industrial development was the most remarkable of all, requiring no rare intellectual qualifications, inspiring no fear in the ruling class, and furnishing, under the reign of peace, forces adequate to the most colossal undertakings. The loss of many useful inventions before the preservative institution of caste arose must have suggested the need of it, and has proved its advantage afterwards in securing the division of labour which was here and there attained. No institution has ever shown itself more adapted to honour ability of various kinds than this polytheistic organisation, which often exalted into apotheosis its commemoration of eminent inventors, who were offered to the adoration of their respective castes. In a social view the virtues of the system are not less conspicuous. Politically its chief attribute was stability. All precautions against attack from within and from without were most energetically instituted. Within, all the castes were united by the single bond of their common subordination to the sacerdotal caste from which each derived all that it had of special knowledge and perpetual instigation. There never was elsewhere such a concentration, for intensity, regularity, and permanence of human power, as that possessed by the supreme caste, each member of which (at least in the higher ranks of the

priesthood) was not only priest and magistrate, but also philosopher, artist, engineer, and physician. . . . As to the influence on morals, this system was favourable to personal morality, and yet more to domestic ; for the spirit of caste was a mere extension of the family spirit. The condition of women was improved notwithstanding the prevalence of polygamy ; for they were rescued from the subjection to rude toil which had been their lot in a barbaric age, and their seclusion according to the custom of polygamy was the first token of homage and of their assignment to a position more conformable to their true nature. As to social morals, the system was evidently favourable to respect for age and homage to ancestors. The sentiment of patriotism did not as yet transcend love of caste, which, narrow as it appears to us, was a necessary preparation for the higher attachment.

The Christian missionary condemns caste because he finds it hard to destroy a priesthood which receives a support from the people when nothing in the shape of spiritual assistance is rendered in return. The British administrator condemns the institution because he cannot on account of it override the internal discipline of a subject community, and finds himself ranked by them for all his authority with their veriest outcasts. I remember well the impression created in my own mind on my first arrival in India, when, on walking out in the evening with a Brahmin subordinate, the Hindoos whom we

might meet would accost me with the respectful gesture they will always accord to official rank, while they would prostrate themselves and rub their forehead in the dust before my companion. To him they rendered a genuine obeisance ; to me they showed a sign of artificial respect only. The sense of official relationship was entirely swallowed up by the stronger feeling of social subordination. It is not only the lower orders that are inspired by this feeling ; all are affected by it. Caste still exercises a predominant influence among all classes of the community. Educated Hindoos are puzzled to make out what they owe to their society, and why they render to caste their tribute of submission when there is nothing to compel their obedience. Nevertheless, the institution is as powerful among those who disregard many of its rules as it was with their fathers who rigidly observed them all. They find it as hard to bear excommunication themselves, and are as disposed to inflict that punishment upon wrongdoers of their community, as was the case with their ancestors in the past. They find it as desirable to cling to their caste-fellows, despite many disagreeable features in their life and character, as their predecessors may have done. Even those who are outside the pale of Hindoo caste seem anxious to organise an institution resembling

caste among themselves. The Eurasian community seems to have already formed into a caste, and the native converts to Christianity, as well as the more self-assertive portion of the Brahmo community, appear to be in the course of forming into new castes. Even a Khalsa Sikh will be found after a time to assume an attitude of marked respect towards Brahmins, and to entertain the most delicate scruples on the subject of caste. And Mahomedans have been so far infected that they have broken up into separate castes with the *jus connubii* as distinct as it is amongst Hindoos.

Caste is thus the existing basis of social order, as the Brahminical polytheism is of Hindoo morality. Supplemented by such sister institutions as the joint family and the village community (both of which are also in transition and have been greatly changed), it has already been subjected to modifications, and is destined to be still further modified by the external influences which are brought to bear on it. Its future must, however, remain a mere speculation so long as the Hindoo nation cannot assume the responsibility of working out its own social evolution. In their present condition the Hindoos cannot possibly have an ideal of their own. Bereft of political independence, their ideas of collective action cannot bear that impress of sound

logic and morality which collective action alone can impart to them. A considerable degree of unity in thought and action has lately been established in political matters, and it may be hoped, therefore, that there will shortly be a similar manifestation in regard to moral and social questions. The problem is a difficult one, and in proportion to its difficulty will be the merit and the reward of those who succeed in solving it. There is neither difficulty nor merit in merely cutting the Gordian knot, which is the method of procedure pursued by Government. The necessary changes must be wrought by the people themselves, arising from national aspirations and emanating from a spontaneous impulse. The changes effected by an alien and benevolently despotic administration are spasmodic and artificial, and they cannot be of permanent value because they are not spontaneous.

The truth is that the moral and social reformation of India, as of every other country, if it is to be effective, must result from the action of internal forces. Its tendencies must be moulded by the accumulated influences of the past and by the direct action of the present. It cannot disconnect itself from the associations which have grown up around the family for generations. It must begin among the domestic *lares* and *penates*. And this is why civilisation

through a foreign government, the popularisation of Western ideas through official insistence, a system of education through officials employed under the Department of Public Instruction, must always fail. Education will never be in a healthy condition so long as the teaching of the home is at utter variance with the teaching of the school or college. Any one who is acquainted with the conditions of an ordinary Hindoo family at its home must have been struck with the bewildering contrast between the domestic environment of the young Hindoo amidst which his active life is spent and the intellectual atmosphere he breathes during his college hours. The domestic life of the Hindoo is indeed in itself not more immoral than that of a European home. Far from it ; there is so much misconception on this point that it is desirable to state what the facts actually are. The affection of Hindoos for the various members of the family group is a praiseworthy and distinctive feature of national character, evinced not in sentiment only, but in practical manifestations of enduring charity ; the devotion of a parent to a child, and of children to parents, is most touching. The normal social relations of a Hindoo family knit together by ties of affection, rigid in chastity, and controlled by the public opinion of neighbouring elders



and caste, command our admiration and in many respects afford an example we should do well to follow.<sup>1</sup> There is nothing radically wrong in the young Hindoo's home associations. But the life he leads does present a painful contradiction where, to take an ordinary type, the family idols are tended by the mother and the other female members of the family at sunrise and sunset with flowers and ablutions and ceremonial observances ; and in the meantime the midday occupation of the student consists in analysing, it may be Milton's *Areopagitica*, a favourite text-book, or some other scathing exposition of priestcraft and idolatry. The professors of the Educational Department deliver their lectures and discourse on Milton or Mill in the same spirit as a magistrate dispenses justice in his cutcherry. They do their official duty, but they make no attempt to exert a moral influence over their pupils, to form their sentiments and habits, or to control and guide their passions. The moral character is left to be wholly moulded by the associations amidst which the young are placed at home without any endeavour to modify or improve it. There is thus a great gulf fixed

<sup>1</sup> The existing Hindoo family system is an organisation in transition along with other national institutions. I publish in an Appendix a letter I addressed on this subject to a Hindoo friend in 1881.

between the relative position of the intellectual and of the moral culture. Collegiate impressions are at present like a tinselled outdoor decoration discarded by their possessor as a superfluity in private. And in the majority of cases they are, at all times, apparent rather than real ; for though the educated natives lose their belief in Hindooism as an intellectual system, it still continues in a marked degree to mould their social and moral prejudices. The result is an anarchy for which the Government is responsible and which it is powerless to remedy. A tendency to look to the State for assistance, a disposition to exaggerate the power of political action over social events, is natural ; but while in some cases no doubt the evils felt fall legitimately within the scope of politics, in others, and these are the vast majority, the Government is powerless to effect a cure or can at best employ but palliative measures. Government can do little more than hold the purse and keep the peace, and put down practices like *Suttee* which are positively murderous ; but even in a case like this, it cannot eradicate the sentiment upon which the practice depends.

The situation is now one of extreme social anarchy, and although the disturbance is not widespread, but prevails only among a limited section of the people, the mere existence of a

disorganised class within the community is in itself no small evil. I am not blind to the defects of this class. I count among its members innumerable friends of sterling merit, and of a high order of probity and ability. No English official has been more indebted than I have been for native aid and co-operation most generously accorded at all times. I would be the last to speak unkindly of friends, colleagues, and subordinates in a distant country. And yet I cannot but observe that the class as a whole labours under defects which are not less serious because they are the result of circumstances over which it has little or no control. The class is educated—highly educated as compared with the mass of the people: who can wonder that it should be conceited? The class is debarred from holding the highest offices under Government: who can wonder that it should be discontented? The class is an artificial and exotic product: who can wonder that it should be internally torn by discord in the family, and by a life of self-contradiction more or less in almost every individual instance?

Such are the penalties which the early pioneers of English education in India have had to pay for the knowledge and power they have acquired. The strength of national associations and social sentiment has fortunately sustained

them for the most part with their own personal character untainted by demoralisation. It is true that they have not altogether escaped the vices of the West ; but the virtues of the West, which they have successfully assimilated, immeasurably turn the scale. The difficulties under which they labour are occasioned by the abrupt departures from old habit and custom, the domestic discords, the social dissensions, the religious confusion, the tenebrous rationalism which insufficiently supplies the place of a belief in the old theology, the bitter and increasing sense of political discontent, the very life of concealment and even of self-deception which as individuals they are so often compelled to lead. The gravity of these difficulties it is almost impossible to exaggerate.

• Enough, however, of such criticism. It is not my object to depreciate the importance of passing events. I have shown no desire to extenuate the difficulties through which India must pass during this revolutionary transition, or to minimise the troubles of the existing crisis. It is certain that when the State endeavours to impart higher instruction and thereby, as is implied, to direct and mould the national mind, it deviates from its proper sphere, and inflicts injury upon intellectual and moral progress. The unavoidable symptoms of social disorder

created by such interference are readily recognisable, and have often been the occasion of unfriendly comment. My own remarks will, I hope, be accepted in the friendly spirit in which they are offered. But when I bring the evil done into comparison with the good : when I take into consideration not only the actual benefits received, but the potential good which must ultimately extend to the whole population : when I recall that English education has burst upon the natives of India for a period of one or at most two generations only : when I observe its effects on all sides and weigh them in the balance, I cannot hesitate to affirm that, notwithstanding drawbacks of all and whatever kind, the dissemination of Western ideas has proved of inestimable advantage to the country.

The beneficial tendency of this revolution is, undoubted. In ever-widening circles it must gradually extend among classes of society at present undisturbed, and as natural forces are encouraged to take the place of artificial development, the demoralisation inseparable from change will become less apparent. And if its injurious tendency is also undoubted, it must be remembered that periods of transition are 'always accompanied by more or less disturbance. To me indeed it seems more noticeable that the community affected should have

passed in so large a measure unscathed through the ordeal than that it should have been demoralised so far as to allow in some respects the vices of Europe to supplant virtues of a distinctly Oriental type. If we may observe in the minds of many educated natives an undisguised contempt for the simple faith of their forefathers, if we must admit the existence of a tendency to exaggerate the value of modern at the expense of ancient achievements, if we cannot deny that one effect of our education has been to undermine the social feelings of attachment, obedience, reverence for age, and respect for ancestors—if these are evils which English education has encouraged—I make bold to say that among the leaders of the native community and among the mass of the people who follow their guidance there is little or no sympathy with these tendencies. The vast majority of Hindoo thinkers have formed themselves into a party of reaction against the voice of a crude and empirical rationalism which seeks only to decry the social monuments raised in ancient times by Brahmin theocrats and legislators, to vilify the past in order to glorify the present, and to sing the shallow glories of an immature civilisation with praises never accorded to the greatest triumphs of Humanity in the past. The innate conservatism of the nation is

beyond the power of any foreign civilisation to shatter. The stability of the Hindoo character could have shown itself in no way more conspicuously than by the wisdom with which it has bent itself before the irresistible rush of Western thought, and has still preserved amidst all the havoc of destruction an underlying current of religious sentiment, and a firm conviction that social and moral order can only rest upon a religious basis.

*THE RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES OF  
INDIA.*

ONE of the earliest and best-established principles of British administration in India is that of religious neutrality. The Government of India as between its subjects and itself does not assume the truth or falsehood of any religion. It allows perfect freedom and liberty to the professors of all creeds. In accordance with this principle, the various provisional phases of religious speculation (the intuitive outcome of Western thought) which are to be found in more or less restless activity among the educated classes of India have not been subjected to any form of official interference. The Government is, perhaps, open to reproach for using its power unduly to advance Christianity when it supports bishops, archdeacons, and a considerable staff of Anglican and Presbyterian chaplains out of revenues almost wholly raised from Hindoos and Mahomedans. It cannot be denied also that native converts enjoy a somewhat excessive share of official patronage, and that the Senates



of the Universities, which are composed of Fellows appointed exclusively by Government, are filled with Protestant missionaries and clergy. Still it is undoubtedly the case that, like the Roman prefects of old, our Indian administrators have in general been careless about spiritual matters. The Government has, broadly speaking, exercised no influence whatever to induce the natives to become Christians, and the natives have responded to this indifference by showing no desire whatever to become converts to the State religion. When Hindooism ceases to be a living power in the minds of the young men who frequent our English schools and colleges, Christianity rarely, if ever, takes its place. The very fact of its profession by the foreign rulers of the country has been represented to me by native gentlemen as a valid reason for their aversion to it.

The strong missionary body, which is more of an educating than a proselytising force, offers some substitute for the beliefs which it destroys. Our State colleges are content with chaos ; their results are subversive only ; the old belief is thrown off, the consequent disturbance issues in no real substitute, and the mental and moral state suffers from the negation. The missionary scheme does contemplate the establishment of an order. It is to the credit of the missionaries

that they have ever held the right end in view, viz. the substitution of a definite social and religious conception for the old Hindoo polity, the downfall of which they foresaw. In the main they have done a good work, and done it bravely. But their failure has been complete. Far be it from me to depreciate the wonderful moral efficacy of Catholicism and the remarkable example of self-sacrifice it once set in a portion of Southern India. But a retrospect of the past no longer presents a promise of any successful proselytism in the future. Wherever there is a highly organised religious creed, Christianity fails to make conversions on any large scale. It is absolutely powerless when brought face to face with Islam; and among Hindoos its influence is confined almost exclusively to the very lowest classes,<sup>1</sup> where the

<sup>1</sup> It has been shrewdly remarked by a competent Catholic writer on this subject, that 'at the very outset of missionary enterprise, the progress of Christianity among the lower castes only tended to augment tenfold the repugnance and hostility of the Brahmins and other high-caste Hindoos. It cannot be too often insisted on that caste is a social as well as a religious distinction. Christianity thus not only appeared in the eyes of Hindoos as a religious innovation, but as the creed of socialism and license which allied itself with all that was lowest and most infamous in the country. In propagating opinions of any kind it is always hazardous to ignore the natural leaders of a community, and attempt to win over the multitude without their co-operation.'—*Dublin Quarterly Review*, October 1868.

I cordially endorse these remarks; they exhibit a thoroughly

mental development has not advanced much beyond the earliest stage. Though here and there an educated native may have been brought to Christianity, the educated natives, as a body, have not been slow to perceive that the intellect of Europe is drifting away from the traditional religion. Whatever change may eventually be effected, the change from Hindooism to Christianity is perhaps the most improbable; the people will not accept it.

The remarks of Dr. Congreve on the prospects of Christianity in India, and on the relations between Christianity and Hindooism and Islam, are so apposite that I cannot do better than quote them in this place. He writes :—

We have two religious systems to deal with in India, the Mahometan and the Brahminical. Both are yet powerful—on neither can we make any impression. If in his contact with Brahminism the missionary puts forward the philosophical side of Christianity, the subtle mind of the Brahmin delights in the combat, and meets him with a counter-philosophy. There is matter for endless dispute, but there is no result. If more wisely advised, the missionary rests on the simple statements of Christianity, on the facts of its history and its appeals to the conscience of men; he spares himself personally the annoyance

just appreciation of the course to be pursued in all important social or religious movements.

of defeat in argument, or the pain of seeing his arguments make no impression, but for his cause the effect is the same. For the religious system of India leaves its worshippers no sense of want, that primary condition of the acceptance of a new religion. The contest is not such as it was with the polytheistic systems of Greece and Rome, which were profoundly undermined by the philosophic culture of the educated, by the moral dissatisfaction of the multitude. In India such would not seem to be the case ; and when you add to the absence of this the force of traditional associations and long organisation, the power of which was tested in the case of the Greek and Roman world, and not broken but by four centuries and a barbarian conquest, you have then the measure of the missionary's difficulties in dealing with Brahminism ; you may form an estimate of the hopelessness of his task.

For the second great religious system with which we are in contact, little need be said. The verdict of history is definite and unimpeachable. On Mahometanism Christianity has made no impression, has tacitly renounced the attempt to make any. The rival Monotheisms met in the middle ages. The issue of the struggle was not doubtful. Greek Christianity succumbed. Latin Christianity waged successfully a defensive war. More than this it was unable to accomplish. Each of the rivals claims for itself an exclusive possession of the religious belief of mankind. Both alike are rejected by the other. They rest side by side convincing monuments of the exaggeration of their respective claims.

And so Comte writes in his preface to the Catechism these striking words :—

Five centuries have passed since Islamism renounced the conquest of the West, and Catholicism abandoned to its eternal rival even the tomb of its pretended founder. In vain did the two religions aspire to spread themselves over the whole territory comprised within the dominion of the Roman Empire. That territory is divided with an almost equal division between the two irreconcilable Monotheisms.

Again, Colonel Osborn, speaking of the missionary failure from another point of view, observes with equal truth :—

The chief obstacle which besets the missionary is that occasioned by the peculiar relationship which exists between Englishmen and natives. The English are not merely the rulers of the country, but rulers in whose inner life, as individuals, the people are of no account—that is to say, the English in India form no attachments ; no friendships with the people of the country. A few among them may associate with the natives from a sense of duty, but for their mental and moral needs their own countrymen are sufficient, and not one Englishman in a thousand, when the hour comes of leaving India for good, is sensible of a wrench, of a void being created in his life by the separation from any native whom he has known. No greater obstacle in the way of mission-work can be conceived than a state of mind such as this. It denotes the want of that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin, and yet it is a defect from which

the English missionary is, of necessity, as little exempt as the English official. . . . Contrast this attitude of aloofness with the feelings of the Apostle Paul towards individual members of the churches which he had founded, and we shall find little difficulty in understanding why Christianity in India does not spread and develop as in the days of Imperial Rome.

To these remarks I only wish to add that there is now within my own observation an increasing opposition to Christianity among the educated classes, a greater repugnance to its doctrines, and a more effective desire to prevent it spreading in any way among the rising generation. Publications, such as the 'Anti-Christian,' have been lately started and find a ready sale among Hindoos and Mahomedans. The spread of education has enabled the people to bind together with more cohesion and unity against a form of proselytism they so much dislike, and conversions to Christianity otherwise than among famine remnants and occasionally among the aboriginal tribes are far less frequent than was formerly the case. During my eighteen years' experience of Bengal I do not remember a single instance of the conversion of a respectable native gentleman to Christianity.

Nevertheless, although the educated Hindoos do not become Christians, they do not as a rule

get rid of their belief in a supreme government. The Hindoo mind naturally runs in a religious groove of thought and recoils from any solution of its present difficulties which does not arise from the past religious history of the nation. And, therefore, the vast majority of Hindoo thinkers do not venture to reject the supernatural from their belief. They adopt Theism in some form or other, and endeavour in this way to give permanence and vitality to what they conceive to be the religion of their ancient scriptures. At the same time they manage to reconcile with this teaching the ceremonial observances of a strictly orthodox Polytheism. They argue that these rites are embedded in the traditions and customs of the people, that they are harmless in themselves, and that their observance tends to bridge over the chasm which otherwise separates the educated classes from the bulk of the population. Their action is thus animated by a spirit of large-hearted tolerance. And there is nothing in it inconsistent with itself. For there is no direct antagonism between a belief in one supreme being ruling over a number of inferior powers, and a belief in several co-ordinate deities each exercising sovereignty within certain vaguely defined limits. At best, however, their attitude is but a compromise between Rationalism and Hindooism. It is liable to misconcep-

tion and abuse. And therefore it is distasteful to certain ardent minds which revolt altogether from compromise, and deem it obligatory to purge themselves from all taint of idolatry or superstition by entering a solemn protest against the popular creed which they regard as at once false and mischievous. It is to such minds that Brahmoism owes its origin and development.

I have no prejudice against the Brahmos as a body : on the contrary, I have the highest personal respect for many of their number, and especially for their distinguished leaders, who have been endowed with no ordinary share of those gifts which enable their possessors to become teachers of the people. I have been myself a witness at the Brahmo services of the remarkable degree of religious intensity of which the Hindoo mind is capable. I have no question that Brahmoism has proved a haven to many who would otherwise have been cast adrift upon the troubled waves of doubt, and that it has afforded them a religion which satisfies their aspirations and ennobles their mode of life. But I find it impossible to regard Brahmoism as a definite belief. It is altogether an esoteric doctrine, not materially distinguishable from the Theism or Unitarianism of Europe. It appeals to the individual, and requires not only a minute process of self-examination, but also a concur-



rence among individuals in their interpretations of self-consciousness. Its metaphysical dogmas may assist its propagation among a certain class of minds. But that class must always be a limited one. Men in general are so constituted that they prefer to take their beliefs upon trust and not to work them out independently : they require teachers, men who speak with authority, as themselves divine, or as direct missionaries of a higher power, or as interpreters of the knowledge slowly accumulated by Humanity in the past. Even granting that each individual would consent to examine himself in order to elicit the requisite first truths, there is no guarantee that the process would be correctly performed in every case, or that the same conclusions would be invariably arrived at. So far as individuals can be induced to agree in their interpretations of self-consciousness, to that extent Brahmoism' offers a basis of organisation ; but it is obvious that such agreement must always be confined to a comparatively narrow circle of believers. The masses require a less abstract creed and one that contains a larger infusion of the human element. There are already indications of a modification in this direction ; and however much the philosophical party among the progressive Brahmos may disclaim any wish to depart from a purely theistic type of worship, it is certain

that their recent successes have been obtained at the expense of their theological metaphysics. Instead of trying to controvert this fact, it would be better if they faced it boldly and acknowledged the paramount necessity of grafting the human upon the divine. It is only by accepting such principles and adopting the most liberal modifications, both in doctrine and practice, that Brahmoism can ever hope to spread among the lower or less educated classes. In its present attitude it will never even form a transitional religion enabling the nation to pass through its present crisis: much less will it ever prove a formidable rival to any of the older creeds.

Somewhat similar in its individualistic character is the metaphysical conception of Theosophy which has lately been exercising a marked influence. The subtleness of its teaching, and the degree of scope which the supernatural interference of spiritual, or so-called astral, phenomena afford to the imagination, are features peculiarly congenial to the Hindoo intellect. A belief in the doctrines of Theosophy is consistent with the tenets of Brahmoism, and even with the professions of orthodox Hindooism. The native mind has also been able to see that in some occult manner, but with a definiteness and force quite unmistakable, the European adherents of

the system have been elevated by a kind of moral regeneration from indifferentism, and sometimes from positive dislike, into sincere and hearty sympathy with the people of the country. The conditions have, therefore, been very favourable to the spread of Theosophy among natives. Tossed to and fro by every blast of vain doctrine, they have rallied round the new-fangled ideas of this weird and obscure system with an eagerness which shows the need among them of a more rational and satisfying belief. But already the enthusiasm of the movement has spent itself. The public exposure of some of the directors of the new cult has proved a severe shock to its votaries, and many of them have renounced their allegiance. Although they are full of faith and trust, to an extent which Englishmen of the nineteenth century are almost incapable of understanding, they cannot but refuse to remain permanently enslaved by a belief in phenomena which are not only incapable of demonstration, but are alleged on credible testimony to be propped up by fraud.

More valid than any of these theological or metaphysical tendencies is the decided advance which has been made, especially in the Bengal Presidency, in the direction of the teachings of Auguste Comte. I freely admit that at first sight an almost impassable gulf appears to be in-

terposed between the Positivist mode of thought and the dreamy mysticism of Brahminical philosophy. The Hindoo, as a rule, is so thoroughly convinced not only of the reality, but also of the supreme efficacy, of his unsubstantial and visionary ideals, that it is difficult to see how he can be brought to that state of mental submission with respect to the mysteries of existence which Positivism so imperatively demands. Sooner or later, however, the logic of events must bring about in India, as well as in Europe, the substitution of the conception of law for that of will ; and, as a necessary consequence, the substitution of a human for a supernatural point of view in all social and religious organisation. The teaching of Comte has already deeply penetrated a few of the most select minds in Bengal. That is quite enough for the present. It is not desirable that Positivism should address itself at the outset to a very wide circle. It is a system which is always misinterpreted by those who fail to master all its characteristic doctrines, and which, if accepted only for its scientific value, is sure to be perverted and made an instrument for increasing the already too prevalent corruption and disorder. The superficial advocate, the mere careless admirer, is, in truth, far more to be deprecated than the most perverse adversary.

The misrepresentation of foes is of little moment, as it can always be repelled ; but the rash zeal of undisciplined partisans is not easily subdued, and may therefore work an incalculable amount of mischief. As Positivism does not appeal to men's fear of punishment or hope of reward during an eternal future, it can afford to wait. The old watchwords have served well enough for regulative purposes in times past. Creeds not yet outworn may continue to serve a little longer, until Positivism has been able to organise in the most advanced nations of the West a small but powerful apostolate, a little band of disciples who can point to the salutary influence which their doctrine has exercised upon the heart as well as the intellect. No well-established religious belief can ever perish until it is confronted with a morality superior to its own, and it cannot therefore be expected that ordinary men should accept Positivism as their rule of life until they have had some opportunity of seeing its moral efficacy displayed in practice.

On the other hand, the religion of Positivism presents in many respects an extraordinary affinity to the system of morality with which all devout Hindoos are already familiar. In a pamphlet recently published,<sup>1</sup> an analogy has

<sup>1</sup> *Chaitanya's Ethics. An Essay*, by Jogendro Chunder Ghose. Published in Calcutta, 1884.

been drawn between the ethics of Chaitanya and the morality of Comte. The zero point of Chaitanya's system—Dispassion, the highest aim of Yogis, Buddhists, Sivaïtes, and Vedantists—finds a profound parallel in Comte's system, where subordination of egoism is largely recommended in general and for the especial culture of the altruistic virtues. The sentiment of kindness as typified in the feeling of the parent for the child has the same high place in both the systems. But it is pointed out that in Comte's system attachment precedes veneration, and takes its type from the conjugal relationship characteristic of Europe, whereas Chaitanya, with a wise regard for the prevailing form of domestic society in India, recommends the culture of veneration as fit to precede that

Chaitanya, a native of Bengal, born in the year 1486 of the Christian era, was a religious reformer of the orthodox Hindoo type, and his followers are now a most important section of the Hindoo community of the lower provinces. For practical purposes the religious denominations of Hindoos would be one or other of the following five well-known sects : (1) the worshippers of *Surya*, or the sun ; (2) of *Ganes*, the benignant lord over the evil powers ; (3) of *Siva*, the god of either destruction or asceticism ; (4) of *Vishnu*, the god of preservation ; and (5) of *Sakti*, or the goddess of force. The worshippers of *Sakti* form the larger proportion of the upper ranks of Hindoo society in Bengal, but the worshippers of *Vishnu*, or *Vaishnavas*, as they are called, constitute the great bulk of the community. The Vaishnavas follow the teachings and accept the apotheosis of Chaitanya.

of attachment. This parallel possesses peculiar importance to the small group of Positivists now forming in India. It is not for them to oppose the powerful but declining authority of Christians on the one hand or of Rationalists on the other. Positivism in India for generations to come will be very much of an exotic. But they cannot fail to perceive that such definite points of contact between Chaitanyism, the latest outcome of Hindoo and Buddhist evolution, and Positivism, standing in exactly the same relation to the evolution of the Christian religion, are practical connecting links between the West and East. And it becomes, therefore, a question of the utmost importance with them to develop these coincidences so as eventually to arrive at a complete harmony with their Hindoo fellow-countrymen, and to avoid as far as possible any direct conflict in regard to those divergences which are but too well known to exist.

The relativity of Positivism affords it also special opportunities for the propagation of a new faith. Its precepts forbid any rupture with the past. On the contrary, they enjoin a just respect for the great religious systems of all countries in their true form. They incorporate all that is good and noble in those systems, readjusted only to the changed conditions of modern life. It is not consistent with

the tenets of Positivism to sow dissension in families or discord among friends. The acceptance of Positivism does not require its followers to break off from their social antecedents, habits, or customs. It has not the effect of alienating them from the past or from the surroundings and environment of their ordinary life. The religion of Humanity is catholic in its sympathies. The eminent Hindoo Positivist,<sup>1</sup> whose work on the 'Ethics of Chaitanya' I have

<sup>1</sup> Baboo Jogendro Chunder Ghose, in a paper read by him on the festival of all the dead, December 30, 1884, and published in Calcutta. The late Mr. Justice Dwarka Nath Mitter, a judge of the Calcutta High Court, who was also a Positivist, entertained similar sentiments. 'From respect for his country's religion he acquiesced in the Hindoo ceremonial with regard to his funeral rites, and that in accordance with all his convictions. When he ceased to be a sceptic, when he adopted

Positive faith, he re-examined his whole religious position and studied the traditions of his forefathers, to see what there was in them that was good and valuable. He took up a tolerant and patient attitude, wishing gradually to modify Hindooism—to guide it, not abruptly destroy it, so while not concealing his opinions, whilst gathering around him people who agreed with him, he respected in his family relations the Brahminical religion in which he was born. His whole domestic life seems to have been ordered on these principles. He retained, I may mention, the supremacy of his mother in the family, though himself married and with children. In dying he was quite open—the language he used shows this—and he spoke with great warmth, placing both his hands in those of Mr. Geddes. Concession on a point of form was under these conditions but an act of just conciliation.'—(Quoted from Dr. Congreve's eighth serial.)



already quoted, writes as follows when addressing his fellow-countrymen on this subject :—

Situated as we are, we must not overlook that we cannot hope and should not desire to escape from the legitimate consequences of our past history. And even if our thoughts might be lifted above our circumstances, we would not be true to our religion if we were carried away too far by our aspirations. For we must remember that, though we might abjure our peculiar past for the sake of a whole world's blessing, *viz.* Positivism, we cannot forsake those in whom that same Past lives and moves even at the present moment, I mean the majority of our countrymen, to whom all European culture is perfectly foreign and must be so for many a long year to come. We must not allow ourselves to be thus separated from our own society. Nay we should rather center our best affections upon the forty millions and odd who live around us and speak our own vernacular tongue. However backward these our countrymen may be in our judgment, it is not the Positive religion which would lead us to disturb our solidarity with them for the uncertain and questionable gain of our establishing another solidarity with the West.

The same writer continues, in language which sets forth the attitude which the early Hindoo Positivists assume during the revolutionary crisis :—

Unfortunately for us we labour under grave disadvantages. Our very contact with European culture weakens our power to make a proper estimate

of what Comte calls the 'instinctive tendencies' of our countrymen. Though among them, we feel a strain which perceptibly draws us pretty far off them. We are not therefore quite in a position to determine how those tendencies would move on to Positivism independently of Western influence, much less to discuss how we could help to expedite their progress. Furthermore the political condition of our country, subjecting us to a constant influx of Western influences; and especially of influences which are very varied, divergent, and even revolutionary, is another serious obstacle in our way. And until these influences come to a close, and until again we succeed thereafter to protect ourselves from internal and external disturbances, the time will not have come for making a proper estimate of the instinctive tendencies of our countrymen.

Nevertheless we cannot forget what we are. We are members of a subject community; we belong to the society of Hindus, and yet we venture to stand forth as Positivists. And such as we are we must live and move; and as we must live and move as subject people, as Hindus and as Positivists, we must not lose sight of what ground is presented to us for planting our religion. And after all the question will be found to lose much of its complexity when we consider that for the present our work must be confined to our own individual lives. For if we can each of us live the life of a fair Positivist in the midst of the society and the Government which surround us, we shall have offered a solution of no mean worth to the present as well as to the future. If we can succeed in assimilating in our life two such widely different elements as Hinduism

and Positivism, we shall have done a great thing to attain the glorious union between the East and the West.

These are wise words, and no remarks of mine will add to their genuine and simple force. They inculcate, on the one hand, that just conciliation which is the keynote of the principles which Positivism has to offer in dealing with other modes of thought ; and, on the other, they enjoin that life of example on the part of the followers of a new religion, the effect of which is beyond all precept, and without which all precept is in vain.

Absolute Nihilism, Theism, which conforms to Hindooism, Brahmoism, Christianity, Theosophy, and, lastly, Positivism, these generally are the varying creeds which among Hindoos survive the wreck of their early faith. As a rule the Hindoos retain their religious instincts but there are no signs at present of the predominance of any creed. Wandering hither and thither like sheep without a shepherd, they beat the air in the vain pursuit after religious truth. We cannot tell what the future—and doubtless it is a far distant future—is destined to bring forth. But I for one cannot bring myself to doubt that the Eastern nations will some day be brought with the rest of the world under one common faith, towards which all discordant

religions will eventually converge. I cannot doubt that by distinct but equivalent courses the great nations of the East will rise by natural progression to the definitive level of the West, and embrace the final universal and human religion, which has its roots in man's moral nature—the same in all ages and climes—while it will not fail in each case to reflect the national life and give expression to its distinctive aspirations. Although the prospects of moral progress in India are threatened by gathering clouds, I derive encouragement from a contemplation of the brilliant success attained by evangelists of an earlier generation. No beneficial impulse is likely to be produced by the mere official experiments of a Government which is alien to the people, and which, from no fault of its own, is necessarily unsympathetic with caste and polytheism. The Educational Department possesses no adequate force for revolutionising the thoughts and manners of the people. The missionary bodies are now as incapable as laymen of sympathising with the special idiosyncrasies of the Hindoo intellect. But the admirable efforts of the Jesuit missionaries in China, and in Southern India, have shown the possibility of surmounting obstacles at first sight fairly insuperable. Had they possessed a more tractable dogma, they would doubtless

have overcome the moral difficulty for themselves. Even in their failure they accomplished a great work, and have set an example of procedure that succeeding missionaries must follow.

It is to the labours of St. Francis Xavier during the sixteenth century that Indian Christianity is chiefly indebted for its distinctive characteristics. He addressed his teaching almost exclusively to the lower orders, and made no systematic attempt to gain over to his side the aristocracy of Hindooism. It was in the beginning of the seventeenth century that the celebrated Jesuit, Robert de Nobili, well knowing how important it was to receive the co-operation of the upper classes, commenced his labours, after the manner of St. Paul, by becoming a Brahmin to the Brahmins. He and his colleagues assumed Hindoo names, and introduced themselves as Brahmin priests of a superior order from the Western world.

‘They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends and kindred ; they desired to have nothing of this world ; they scarcely took the necessaries of life ; attention to the body, even when needful, was irksome to them.

‘They were given as an example for all religious, and ought more to excite us to make

good progress than should the number of the lukewarm make us grow slack.

‘Their footsteps remaining still bear witness that they were right holy and perfect men, who waging war so stoutly trod the world under their feet.’

Their success was due to their wonderful power of sympathy, and their rare facility of adaptation to unaccustomed modes of thought and action. They possessed in an eminent degree the apostolic faculty of being all things to all men without compromising the fundamental principles of their creed. Like skilful pilots, they steered clear of an absolute enforcement of doctrine, and instinctively adopted a theory of relativity in all their dealings with the social customs and religions of the Eastern world. The evangelists of the future, with all the enthusiasm they may derive from a religion which shall inspire a loftier ideal and a more human goal, will find no nobler exemplars than St. Xavier and De Nobili in their genuine zeal and self-sacrificing spirit in the propagation of a new faith.



## APPENDIX.

### *Being a letter addressed to a Native Friend on the Hindoo Joint Family System.*

United Service Club,

Calcutta : June 24, 1881.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your long and interesting letter of May 6<sup>1</sup> deals with the most important principles of the Hindoo Social System, and raises difficult questions which I am very imperfectly prepared to answer. Moreover, as you are aware, I have little leisure to give to the subject. I venture to offer you only the following observations.

The basis of the Hindoo Social System being at present the Joint Family, you inquire whether it is possible to make the constituent elements of this family harmonise with the Positivist requirements of the family system.

To the question so put I feel I must give an answer in the negative; but I do so in no unqualified manner, and with considerable hesitation. The conditions of a Hindoo Joint Family differ from those of a family which Western Positivists look on as the unit of society. The Hindoo Family System is

<sup>1</sup> The substance of that letter was reproduced in an article entitled 'Our Joint Family Organisation,' and published in the *Calcutta Review* for October 1881.



the result of a past history, to which Europe presents no parallel. Taking its remote origin from the same sources as caste, it has been largely modified by the existence of the tribal *gotra*, which may be described as a caste within a caste, the members of which are of equal rank, but are precluded from intermarriage, until it has developed into its present phase of coparcenary relationship with all the members of the same family. It is unnecessary that I should follow you in your inquiries into the antiquity of the system. I take it as you describe it in its normal type as consisting of seven generations of agnates, who are entitled to a common mess, to common worship, and to a share in the common estate. Only, I may add, that in practice other relations join the family who are not entitled to commensality, but who are admitted to the enjoyment of their share by charitable considerations.

From the nature of the case, therefore, the Hindoo Joint Family System consists of a large number of persons, many of whom depend upon it for their general support, and, as you point out, joint families, certainly serve to maintain a number of idle mouths. This I look upon as an evil. The climate of India is enervating, while the necessities of life are very easily and cheaply obtained ; and there is a tendency in consequence among a great mass of the population to become idlers, and to rest content with the support they receive from the charity of the central family. These drones of society are, in fact, a very numerous class in India. It is this state of things which I condemn as a bad one. It is desirable to encourage among individuals not only a sense of self-reliance, but a desire to be independent, and a feeling of shame in receiving support from the charity or labour of

others without the return of any corresponding equivalent. It is only the sick and infirm, women and children, and, for special reasons, the priesthood, who are rightly supported by the labour of others. The able-bodied man must work, and the necessity of work is a principle which, above all others, requires to be implanted in the mind of the Oriental, whose home is in a hemisphere where the bounty of nature seems almost to remove every physical stimulus to exertion. The dignity of labour is a faint glimmering light even in Western Europe ; but in India such an idea is not only unknown but repellent, and it is considered disgraceful in a man to work for his livelihood by the labour of his hands. Therefore I believe that in India any system of social life which indirectly or directly may be said to afford encouragement to sloth is injurious, and that we should do our best to modify or eradicate it.

At the same time I agree with you in recognising the value of the Hindoo Joint Family System even in this particular aspect. Too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of encouraging the charitable sentiments to which it gives occasion. These sentiments, you truly remark, evoke a large measure of kindness on one side and reverence on the other.

I can, however, by no means admit that the system affords a practical solution to the difficulties of the pauper question in India. I think you somewhat unnecessarily assume that if the family drones were bereft of family support they would sink into the condition of paupers, and become a burden upon the general community. This argument may be unduly pressed. For there is indeed little or no analogy

between the problem of pauperism in Europe and of poverty in India. In ordinary times—famine and other similar calamities apart—the pauper of India is not like the pauper of England, for whom sustenance can only be found at the public cost ; and the reason of this is that the necessities of life in an inclement country like England are so immeasurably greater and more expensive than they are in India. In ordinary times I should have no fear of the pauperisation of India if the Hindoo Joint Family System ceased to exist. There is no pauperisation among Mahomedans, with whom no such system prevails. In times of crisis the charity of the joint family dries up unavoidably, and the misery and starvation among the idle mouths dependent on it for their support is even greater than it would have been if they had previously been in the habit of endeavouring to support themselves. These drones are paupers already. They should be compelled to work, but the existence of the Family System removes the necessity. Only in time of famine it is that they are cast out, a useless number of mouths to feed, who in no inconsiderable degree enhance the difficulty of the problem of famine administration.

My principal objection to the influence of the Hindoo Family System is based on these grounds. But there are other objections which at first sight may appear even stronger than these. You do not hesitate to draw prominent attention to them when you write,—

A family like this cannot dispense with the *Purda* System.<sup>1</sup> A numerous group like our joint family, between

<sup>1</sup> *Purda* means a curtain. The *Purda* System means the system under which women are secluded in the *Zenana*, or women's apartments.

whom the bonds of natural affection are very unequal, cannot, I fear, be allowed the fullest social intercourse, and that within the seclusion of the home, without serious danger to their moral purity ; and the *Purda* being thus necessary within the family, it cannot be dispensed with in respect of outsiders.

The *Purda*, as well as the subordinate organisation of the *Zehana* System, requires that the newly married wife should be trained to the habits and ways of the society she enters into. To this end infant marriages are indispensable more or less.

I am not competent to say, with reference to the above remarks, whether you are justified in assuming that the fullest social intercourse between the sexes within the seclusion of their homes is calculated to endanger their moral purity. There is a great difference between Eastern and Western homes in this respect. In the mere construction and disposal of the rooms, an English dwelling-house affords complete privacy to the women of the family ; while, at the same time, the men and women meet together in the discharge of their daily domestic duties with perfect freedom, and without the faintest sense or trace of any impropriety. But an Indian home is different : the fewer rooms and comparative absence of privacy, the larger and more varied elements of the household, even the character and limited quantity of clothing of both sexes necessitated by the exigencies of climate ; these reasons, it may be, lead to the imposition of some restrictions as a wise arrangement. But, if so, the result is to be deplored, and I can never be persuaded to look upon the *Purda* System as consistent with the relationship which should exist between the members of a family. It consigns women to a con-

dition of subordination and subjection which experience shows us is inseparable from a life of domestic servitude. It is based upon a coarse view of life, which has no other bond of union between the sexes than a mere sensual idea, and, as you are forward to admit, it is entirely incompatible with the important functions which Positivism prescribes for women.

The *Purda* and *Zenana* Systems you describe as indispensable complements of the Hindoo family as it at present exists, and, this being so, you add that infant marriages are also indispensable, more or less. I am obliged to accept your statement of this part of the case : but, if the facts are so, it is almost unnecessary to give any further reply to the question at the beginning of your letter, or to adduce any other evidence to show that the conditions of a Hindoo Joint Family are irreconcilable with the Positivist requirements of the Family System. I have never heard any sound argument adduced in favour of the institution of infant marriage. It is intended, no doubt, as a preventive of immorality. But even from this aspect it is a failure, for it allows boys and girls a free scope for indulgence in their passions, at an age when they have reached neither their physical nor mental maturity, and when the observance of chastity ought to have been enforced on them as a moral discipline. I need add nothing about the physical deterioration in the offspring of such marriages : it is a notorious fact, too patent to be ignored. I will only point out another evil result of the practice, in that early marriage often leads to early widowhood, and the abundance of young widows in India, as the police annals of the country amply testify, is a fruitful source of immorality and crime. There is something, no

doubt, to be said for the *Purda* and *Zenana* Systems, but nothing, that I can see, for infant marriage ; and, looking to its effects in the domestic circle as well as more generally in society, both in its present influences and future results, I can but declare that the institution is one unreservedly condemned—condemned in the same category as polygamy, for instance—by the tenets of Positivism.

I have already said that my principal objection to the Hindoo Family System is the opportunity it affords to a large proportion of the able-bodied population of the country to live in idleness : without your authority I should never have been prepared to admit that the seclusion of women and infant marriage were essential concomitants of the system. I regret that the system should be held responsible for having done something more than accord to these evil customs its baneful sanction. For I am not blind to the excellences of your family organisation ; and I desire to especially acknowledge the admirable domestic influence it exercises upon its members. As an Englishman, with my home in a country where the family tie is comparatively lightly regarded, and the members of a family tear themselves asunder as a matter of course and almost without compunction, and settle apart from one another in all the quarters of the globe, I cannot but appreciate the immense affective superiority of the organisation you enjoy. Properly speaking, it is only by the natural cultivation of the family affections that a man is able instinctively to call into existence dispositions calculated to fit him individually for public life. In your family arrangements you possess, therefore, through a process of progressive development, the necessary panoply of life, and I trust that this high

recognition of the urgency of domestic sympathy will never be forgotten, whatever may be the vicissitudes the Hindoo Joint Family System is destined to experience.

In conclusion, I will only add, as you have pointed out in your letter, that the whole force of the British administration has been directed to break up the existing social order; and though the influence of a foreign domination is superficial in most respects, it has been able at least to undermine the foundations of the Hindoo Joint Family System, which, partly from this cause and partly from its own inherent defects, I cannot but look upon as a doomed institution. I am not inclined to overrate the force of Government as a solvent power in any social direction, but in this case the action of Government is, so far as I can judge, in consonance with a natural and even healthy tendency of events. The interference of Government in this case is therefore not altogether matter for regret, and, in my opinion, it only remains for the leaders of the Hindoo community, by gentle and judicious guidance, to control the period of transition, so that it may be passed over with the least possible disturbance, and, after rejecting the environments which prejudice and disfigure the present system, to reorganise the excellent materials which are available for their purpose upon a sound basis.

I am, my dear sir,

Yours very sincerely,

H. J. S. COTTON.

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